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Summary record of the 1st meeting

Held at Headquarters, New York, on Monday, 8 October 2007, at 10 a.m.

Chairman: Mr. Wolfe .... (Jamaica)

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The meeting was called to order at 10.30 a.m.

Statement by the Chairman

1. **The Chairman**, stressing the importance of the Committee's work, said that he would lead with impartiality. He urged members to be punctual and cooperative, bearing in mind that the Committee had a heavy agenda.

Organization of work (A/62/250; A/C.3/62/1; A/C.3/62/L.1, A/C.3/62/L.1/Add.1 and Add.2)

2. **The Chairman** said that the list of agenda items allocated to the Third Committee was contained in document A/C.3/62/1. He drew attention to section II of the report of the General Committee (A/62/250), which recommended certain guidelines with regard to the conduct of meetings. He wished to highlight three guidelines relating to: (a) the number of resolutions adopted by the General Assembly; (b) the length of resolutions; and (c) the need to allow sufficient time for the preparation of estimates of expenditures by the Secretariat and for their consideration by the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions and the Fifth Committee.

3. **Mr. Khane** (Secretary of the Committee) drew attention to document A/C.3/62/1, which showed the correct numbering of the agenda items. The allocation of agenda item 65, on the report of the Human Rights Council, was still under discussion. An addendum had been issued to the report of the Secretary-General on the follow-up to the tenth anniversary of the International Year of the Family and beyond (A/62/132), under agenda item 62 (b). The Committee should organize its work so as to conclude consideration of agenda items in a staggered manner and complete its work earlier than the date originally planned in order to allow the General Assembly to consider the relevant reports during the main part of its session. By the same token, delegations should respect the guidelines on the submission of draft proposals.

4. **The Chairman** stressed the importance of following the proposed timetable insofar as possible. In particular, it was important that draft resolutions that required lengthy negotiations should be drawn up as soon as possible, and all deadlines should be scrupulously observed. Delegations initiating proposals should inform the secretariat of the Committee or a member of the Bureau accordingly.

5. He took it that, following established practice, the Committee agreed to approve the list of special rapporteurs and independent experts that had been read out by the Secretary.

6. *It was so decided.*

7. **The Chairman** invited countries that wished to make statements about the programme of work outlined in documents A/C.3/62/L.1 and Add.1 and 2 to do so.

8. **Mr. Babadoudou** (Benin), speaking on behalf of the Group of African States, said that by taking the initiative to submit reports on the human rights situation in Nepal and in northern Uganda, the Secretary-General had encroached on the powers of the Human Rights Council, even if he was exercising his prerogative under the Charter and the rules of procedure. Moreover, General Assembly resolution 48/141 did not give the High Commissioner for Human Rights an explicit mandate to submit such reports. The submission of that type of report could have a negative effect on the ongoing peace process in those countries, especially Uganda. He therefore requested that the two reports should be deleted from the list of documents to be considered by the Committee.

9. **Mr. Amorós Núñez** (Cuba), after emphasizing that all delegations should have time to express their views on all the matters raised, said it was not clear that the Committee needed to take a position on the two reports in question.

10. **Mr. Butagira** (Uganda), expressing support for the statement made by the representative of Benin on behalf of the Group of African States, requested that the reports of the High Commissioner for Human Rights on the situation of human rights in Nepal and in Uganda should be deleted from the list of documents submitted to the Committee for its consideration. The submission of those reports had not been mandated by either the General Assembly or the Human Rights Council, and neither General Assembly resolution 48/141 nor resolution 60/251 authorized the High Commissioner to submit such reports. The High Commissioner should report to the Human Rights Council or, if she wished to address the General Assembly, she should do so through the Economic and Social Council. It was regrettable that the States concerned had not been informed in advance and he feared that the submission of the report on Uganda might undermine the peace talks currently under way,

as well as the goodwill demonstrated by the parties. His delegation therefore requested that the report on Uganda should be removed from the list of documents submitted to the Committee for its consideration.

11. **Ms. Martins** (Portugal), responding, on behalf of the European Union, to the request made by the representative of Benin and supported by the representative of Uganda, recalled that the Committee had already examined similar reports. She would appreciate it if the Secretary would explain whether the High Commissioner was authorized to submit the two reports in question.

12. **Mr. Hayee** (Pakistan) pointed out that the mandate of the High Commissioner for Human Rights was to assist Member States and the General Assembly in matters pertaining to the promotion and protection of human rights in the world. The High Commissioner was not authorized to submit documents or reports other than those requested by either the General Assembly or the Human Rights Council. It was not up to the High Commissioner to decide which matters should be considered by the General Assembly. His delegation therefore supported the request made by the representatives of Uganda and Benin to have the two reports removed from the list of documents to be considered.

13. **Mr. Bhattaral** (Nepal) fully supported the statement made by the representative of Benin on behalf of the Group of African States. The two reports should be considered by the Human Rights Council and not by the General Assembly.

14. **Ms. Shestack** (United States of America) said that as a universal body, the Committee should consider human rights issues and the reports of the High Commissioner for Human Rights if the High Commissioner believed that a given situation should be brought to the attention of the Committee. Her delegation was not in favour of having the two reports removed from the list of documents submitted to the Committee for consideration.

15. **Mr. Khane** (Secretary of the Committee), replying to the question raised by Portugal on behalf of the European Union, said that the Secretariat's decision to add the reports on the human rights situation in Nepal and in Uganda to the list of documents to be considered by the Committee was based on paragraph 4 (b) of General Assembly resolution 48/141, according to which the High Commissioner was authorized to submit reports even if they were not subject to a specific mandate.

16. **Mr. Butagira** (Uganda) said that he had heard the Secretariat's position on the question, but believed that the procedure adopted by the High Commissioner was not the correct one and was not supported by the resolutions that had been mentioned. On the one hand, there was a Human Rights Council and, on the other, an Assembly, with a mandate. Claiming a universal right to submit reports undermined the very essence of the resolutions in question. Those resolutions had not been interpreted correctly. Uganda was not shying away from discussing human rights, but the appropriate procedure must be followed. The High Commissioner had no right to bring the matter up in the way she had done. The question should be settled by a vote.

17. **Mr. Babadoudou** (Benin), speaking on behalf of the Group of African States, said that he did not understand the interpretation that had been given of General Assembly resolution 48/141 on the creation of the post of the High Commissioner for Human Rights. While he recognized that the Secretary-General had the prerogative to draw the international community's attention to issues he considered urgent, he wondered what such reports could contribute to the Committee's deliberations. Furthermore, the Human Rights Council had agreed on a number of provisions that the Committee had not yet had a chance to review. He therefore requested that those reports should not be submitted to the Committee during the sixty-second session.

18. **Mr. Amorós Núñez** (Cuba) said that he was ready to discuss reports and other documents that had been submitted to the Committee under an intergovernmental agreement. While the Committee had in fact previously decided to review a report which did not fall under such an agreement, a large number of delegations had stated that they were not prepared to review the report in question, in accordance with the established practice of the Committee. According to the Secretary of the Committee, the decision to consider such reports was based on paragraph 4 (b) of resolution 48/141, at the beginning of which it was stated that the activities of the High Commissioner for Human Rights were within the framework of the overall competence, authority and decisions of the General Assembly, the Economic and Social Council and the Commission on Human Rights. For a report to be considered, there must be prior agreement. The case

referred to by the representative of Portugal had been an exception. The consideration of such reports by the Committee would constitute a precedent. Like the representative of Uganda and that of Benin, speaking on behalf of the Group of African States, his delegation was therefore opposed to the consideration of such reports by the Committee.

19. **Mr. Saeed** (Sudan) said that he could not accept the Secretary's response, as it was not the Secretariat's responsibility to interpret resolutions adopted by delegations and to take the place of Member States. That was a very dangerous precedent. While the Office of the High Commissioner was at the service of Member States, efforts were being made to give it a role that went beyond its mandate. The Secretariat's decision to submit the reports in question for the consideration of the Committee should have been taken in concert with the Member States. The Chairman and Bureau of the Committee had to play their role; it was important to take a decision on the matter.

20. **Ms. Martins** (Portugal) proposed that the decision on the inclusion of the two reports in the documentation submitted to the Committee should be deferred in order to give the Bureau and various groups time to hold consultations.

21. **Mr. Babadoudou** (Benin) said that the Group of African States disagreed with the Portuguese representative's proposal that the decision should be deferred. He requested the simple withdrawal of the two reports from the list of documents submitted to the Committee for consideration.

22. **The Chairman** noted that the delegation of Benin, on behalf of the Group of African States, and supported by the delegations of Uganda, Cuba, Pakistan, Nepal and Sudan, had requested that the references to documents A/62/346 (Report of the High Commissioner for Human Rights on the human rights situation in Nepal) and A/62/347 (Report of the High Commissioner for Human Rights on the human rights situation in Uganda) in document A/C.3/62/L.1/Add.2 should be deleted.

23. **Ms. Shestack** (United States of America) said that she was not in favour of that deletion and supported the proposal put forth on behalf of the European Union, which would allow delegations time to receive instructions from their capitals.

24. **Ms. Blitt** (Canada), supported by **Ms. Kolshus** (Norway), endorsed the Portuguese representative's proposal that the decision on the matter should be deferred.

25. **Mr. Rogachev** (Russian Federation) proposed that the Committee should hear from the delegations directly concerned. It was essential that the Committee should take a decision on the matter if it was to finish its work by 21 November.

26. **Mr. Babadoudou** (Benin) said that, since he had not received a mandate from the Group of African States regarding a deferment of the decision, he requested that the meeting should be suspended to allow time for consultations.

27. *The meeting was suspended at 11.45 a.m. and resumed at 11.50 a.m.*

28. **Mr. Babadoudou** (Benin) said that, following consultations, the Group of African States had decided to maintain its position, namely, to request the simple withdrawal of the two reports from the list of documents submitted to the Committee during its sixty-second session.

29. **Ms. Martins** (Portugal) said that, following consultations, the States members of the European Union wished to request time in order to take a decision. The proposal in question was a new one and, in application of rule 120 of the rules of procedure, delegations had to be informed of a new proposal before it was submitted to the Committee; that had not been done.

30. **Mr. Vigny** (Switzerland) supported the proposal to defer a decision on the proposal of the representative of Benin and said that he agreed with the representative of Portugal that it would be a good idea to refer the matter to the Bureau to allow it to propose a solution before a decision was taken.

31. **Mr. Khane** (Secretary of the Committee) asked the representative of Portugal to clarify whether, by invoking rule 120 of the rules of procedure, she had intended her proposal to be a motion under that rule. If so, the Committee should take action on it immediately.

32. **Ms. Martins** (Portugal) said that her intention in invoking rule 120 had been to request the delay of 24 hours provided for in the rules of procedure for the consideration of any new proposal.

33. **Mr. Amorós Núñez** (Cuba), speaking on a point of order, said that the proposal before the Committee had been circulated on 4 October 2007 and that it had been officially registered on that date.

34. **Ms. Martins** (Portugal) said that the new proposal she was referring to was not document A/C.3/62/L.1/Add.2, but rather the proposal made by the representative of Benin, on behalf of the Group of African States, that the two reports of the High Commissioner should be withdrawn from the list of documents to be submitted to the Committee.

35. **The Chairman**, noting that there was no agreement on the proposal made by the representative of Portugal, again asked whether the Committee wished to delete references to documents A/62/346 and A/62/347 from document A/C.3/62/L.1/Add.2.

36. **Ms. Martins** (Portugal), supported by **Mr. Vigny** (Switzerland), again invoked rule 120 of the rules of procedure and repeated that the European Union was not prepared to take a position on the request by the representative of Benin, on behalf of the Group of African States, or to put the question to a vote. She reiterated her request for a delay of 24 hours. It would be very useful to hear the views of the High Commissioner for Human Rights on her reasons for wishing to submit the two reports before taking a decision.

37. **Ms. Park E.** (Republic of Korea) said that her delegation could not take a position on the matter without consulting its capital.

38. **Mr. Ashiki** (Japan) said that his delegation would like more time to decide on the issue and to consult its capital. He would also like the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights to explain the reasons for the submission of the reports.

39. **Mr. Butagira** (Uganda) said that he was disappointed that the representative of Portugal had omitted the second half of rule 120 of the rules of procedure. He suggested that she should submit a motion and said that he did not wish to defer the debate.

40. **Mr. Ritter** (Liechtenstein) said he felt as though he had been ambushed, since the proposal submitted by the representative of Benin would fundamentally modify the rules adopted by the Committee the previous year, when it had taken a decision on the report of the High Commissioner for Human Rights on the situation of human rights in Nepal. The Committee had in fact taken note of the report without any objections having been heard. Since a decision to change a precedent required mature reflection, his delegation was not in a position to take an immediate decision. Given the importance of the issue, it suggested that the Bureau should determine why the previous year's solution no longer seemed appropriate.

41. **Ms. Feller** (Mexico) said that she was not in a position to take a decision on such a delicate issue and that, like the representative of Portugal, she would like to receive additional information from the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights in order to understand why the two reports were being submitted to the General Assembly for its consideration, and why the report on the situation of human rights in Nepal had been submitted to the General Assembly the previous year.

42. **Ms. Molaroni** (San Marino) supported the proposals made by the representative of Portugal on behalf of the European Union, as well as those made by the representatives of Switzerland and Liechtenstein.

43. **Ms. Pi** (Uruguay), speaking on behalf of the Common Market of the South (MERCOSUR), requested more time to decide on the issue.

44. **Ms. Shestack** (United States of America) joined other delegations in requesting time to take a decision on the proposal submitted by the representative of Benin. Clearly, the Committee had not arrived at a consensus on the withdrawal of the two reports on the list.

45. **The Chairman** said that while there was no consensus to withdraw the reports on the list, there was also no consensus to postpone the decision on the matter.

46. **Ms. Kolshus** (Norway) agreed with the Chairman that there was no agreement on the proposal of Portugal, but that there was also clearly none on the proposal made by the representative of Benin. She regretted that the discussion had taken so much time and said it was unfortunate to have to begin the work of the Committee by putting the issue to a vote. She asked that delegations should be given time to consult with their capitals.

47. **Ms. Blitt** (Canada) said that she would like to have additional time to examine the issue and to

consult with her Government before taking a decision on such a sensitive matter, to which no objections had been raised at the previous session. She also wished to hear the explanations of the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights and pointed out that the Bureau should study the issue in more depth. She therefore strongly supported the request made by the representative of Portugal that the decision should be deferred.

48. **Mr. Bhattarai** (Nepal) said that the Committee had previously considered certain reports which the Human Rights Council had not had the time to consider. It should not, however, systematically be a substitute for that body, and it was for that reason that his delegation supported Benin's proposal.

49. **Ms. Halabi** (Syrian Arab Republic) said that her delegation was also in favour of Benin's proposal. Indeed, the Syrian Arab Republic had always advocated dialogue on human rights issues and not their inclusion on the Committee's agenda. The follow-up to those reports was the responsibility of the Secretary-General or the recently created Human Rights Council, whose work she did not wish to jeopardize.

50. **Ms. Sapag** (Chile) said that that the matter must be studied in depth. To make an informed decision consistent with past practice, she wished to receive information from the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, whose actions were vigorously supported by her country, and to be allowed further time for consultations.

51. **Mr. Babadoudou** (Benin), speaking on behalf of the African Group, said that the representative of Portugal had been wrong to invoke rule 120 of the rules of procedure and that the discussion could have been concluded more swiftly on its proposal, which was supported by Cuba, Nepal, Pakistan, Sudan and Uganda.

52. **Ms. Shestack** (United States of America), speaking on a point of order, requested a suspension of the meeting under rule 118 of the rules of procedure so that consultations could take place, given the delicate nature of the decision the Committee was being asked to take.

53. *A recorded vote was taken on the motion proposed by the United States of America under rule 118 of the rules of procedure.*

In favour:

Albania, Andorra, Argentina, Armenia, Australia, Austria, Belgium, Bolivia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Brazil, Bulgaria, Canada, Chile, Costa Rica, Croatia, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, El Salvador, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Guatemala, Honduras, Hungary, Iceland, Iraq, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Japan, Jordan, Latvia, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Mexico, Monaco, Mozambique, Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Oman, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, Poland, Portugal, Republic of Korea, Romania, San Marino, Serbia, Singapore, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Turkey, Ukraine, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United States of America, Uruguay, Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of).

Against:

Algeria, Angola, Bahrain, Bangladesh, Barbados, Belarus, Benin, Bhutan, Botswana, Brunei Darussalam, China, Colombia, Congo, Côte d'Ivoire, Cuba, Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Djibouti, Dominica, Egypt, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Gabon, Gambia, Ghana, Grenada, Guinea, India, Indonesia, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Kenya, Kuwait, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Lesotho, Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, Madagascar, Malawi, Malaysia, Mali, Mauritania, Morocco, Myanmar, Namibia, Nepal, Nicaragua, Niger, Nigeria, Pakistan, Philippines, Qatar, Russian Federation, Saint Lucia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Saudi Arabia, Senegal, Sierra Leone, South Africa, Sri Lanka, Sudan, Swaziland, Syrian Arab Republic, Thailand, Togo, Tunisia, Uganda, United Arab Emirates, United Republic of Tanzania, Uzbekistan, Viet Nam, Yemen, Zambia, Zimbabwe.

Abstaining:

Antigua and Barbuda, Azerbaijan, Bahamas, Belize, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Guyana, Haiti, Jamaica, Palau, Suriname, Tonga, Trinidad and Tobago.

54. *The motion was rejected by 71 votes to 65, with 13 abstentions.*

55. **Ms. Shestack** (United States of America) said that she was opposed to the deletion of the reference to documents A/62/346 and A/62/347 in document

A/C.3/62/L.1/Add.2 and requested a recorded vote on the proposal by Benin.

56. **Ms. Martins** (Portugal), speaking on behalf of the European Union, said she would like to have additional time to examine Benin's proposal, particularly in view of the explanations that could be provided by the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights. In her view, the fact that the High Commissioner had brought the situation of human rights in Nepal and Uganda to the attention of the Committee, as indicated by the Secretary, was reason enough not to delete the reference in document A/C.3/62/L.1/Add.2. Her delegation would vote against Benin's proposal.

57. **Mr. Fleschl** (France) said that his delegation aligned itself with the statement made by the representative of Portugal. While he recognized the validity of any proposal to delete a reference, the requests made by delegations for additional time should also be respected.

58. **Mr. Frick** (Germany) said that his delegation associated itself with that of Portugal. Delegations should have more time to consult with their Governments. He also regretted the fact that the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights had not had an opportunity to express its opinion on the subject. His delegation would vote against Benin's proposal.

59. **Mr. Amorós Núñez** (Cuba), referring to paragraph 4 of resolution 48/141, in which the General Assembly had defined the mandate of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, pointed out that members of the Committee were entitled to judge the appropriateness of the questions that were brought before it by the High Commissioner. His delegation would therefore vote in favour of Benin's proposal.

60. **Mr. Ritter** (Liechtenstein) said that his small delegation could not receive instructions from its Government as quickly as other delegations. He would therefore be forced to reject Benin's proposal.

61. **Ms. Van Beest** (Netherlands), supported by **Mr. Kingston** (New Zealand), regretted that delegations did not have the time necessary to hold consultations with each other, with their Governments and with the Office of the High Commissioner, since many countries would have preferred to take a decision following such consultations. Moreover, if consultations had been held with interested delegations, the issue might have been settled in a manner less harmful to the work of the Committee. They would vote against Benin's proposal.

62. **Ms. Park** (Republic of Korea), referring to the rules of procedure, said that delegations must be informed of proposals concerning important issues in a timely manner. She would therefore be obliged to vote against Benin's proposal.

63. **Ms. Blitt** (Canada) and **Mr. Ashiki** (Japan), also indicated that, for the same reasons, they had no other choice but to reject the proposal by Benin.

64. **Ms. Cross** (United Kingdom) joined the previous speakers in regretting the need for a vote and the lack of time given to delegations. Despite the relevance of the debate on the proposal by Benin, she would vote against it.

65. **Mr. Storaci** (Italy) said that he would like to consult his Government in order to take an informed decision on such an important issue. While he recognized the validity of Benin's proposal, he would be obliged to vote against it.

66. **Mr. Makanga** (Gabon), speaking on a point of order, suggested that the Committee should proceed to the vote requested by the United States of America, since it was perfectly clear what the different positions were and what was at stake.

67. **Mr. Csuday** (Hungary) and **Ms. Molaroni** (San Marino) underlined that delegations were not able to consult with their respective Governments and that additional time could have allowed them to reach a decision. They would vote against Benin's proposal.

68. **Ms. Feller** (Mexico) said that, while she respected the proposal submitted by the African Group, she would nevertheless adopt the same position. She regretted not having been given more time and not having been able to hear the explanations of the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights. She pointed out that the Office of the High Commissioner was not subject to the authority of the Human Rights Council and that it still cooperated with the Committee. Her delegation would have to vote against the proposal by Benin.

69. **Mr. Gibbons** (Ireland) added that the High Commissioner for Human Rights was authorized to submit reports to the Committee and that that had not

been a problem at the previous session. In the absence of additional time, his delegation would reject Benin's proposal.

70. **Mr. Rogachev** (Russian Federation) noted that all organs of the Secretariat must fulfil their mandates, that the report on Nepal had been adopted the previous year under different circumstances and that, while it was legitimate to wish to obtain more information, it was equally legitimate to continue the work without delay. His delegation would vote against the proposal by Benin, although it did not see the need for a vote.

71. **Ms. Malinovska** (Latvia) said that she would have liked more time and to have heard the explanations of the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights. Her delegation would vote against Benin's proposal.

72. **Mr. Vigny** (Switzerland), supported by **Mr. Nihon** (Belgium), said that he would have liked to see the issue referred to the Bureau so that it could find a compromise solution. The High Commissioner for Human Rights was competent to inform the General Assembly about her work. He asked that the decision on the proposal should be postponed for 24 hours. Otherwise, he would reject the proposal.

73. **Ms. Halabi** (Syrian Arabic Republic) said that her delegation was committed to implementing the provisions of paragraph 4 of resolution 48/141 and would therefore vote in favour of Benin's proposal.

74. **Mr. Frelih** (Slovenia) said that he was surprised by Benin's proposal and regretted such haste. His delegation would vote against the proposal, unless it could hold swift consultations with its Government and obtain additional information.

75. **Mr. Harmanovský** (Slovakia) said that he deeply regretted that the work of the Committee had taken such a turn. If he had been present at the time of the vote on the motion proposed by the United States of America under rule 118 of the rules of procedure, he would have voted in favour of suspending the meeting. He added that his delegation would reject Benin's proposal.

76. **Ms. Robles Cartes** (Spain) said that she would have liked to consult her Government and to hear the explanations of the Office of the High Commissioner. Her delegation would vote against Benin's proposal.

77. **Ms. Shestack** (United States of America), making a general statement, said that she bitterly regretted the working methods being employed at the current meeting. She sided with those delegations that were in favour of holding consultations and pointed out that the deletion of the reference to documents A/62/346 and A/62/347 would be contrary to the mandate of the Committee, which was entrusted with examining the situation of human rights throughout the world. Her delegation asked the Chairman not to force a vote. However, if a vote should take place, her delegation reserved the right to speak in explanation of vote before the vote and it would vote against the proposal of the Group of African States.

78. **Ms. Čolaković** (Bosnia and Herzegovina) said that her delegation associated itself with that of Liechtenstein and would vote against Benin's proposal.

79. **Ms. Paunksnienė** (Lithuania) said that she shared the concerns expressed by some delegations about the addition of new agenda items and noted that her delegation would reject Benin's proposal.

80. **Ms. Doláková** (Czech Republic) noted that the consideration of the report on Nepal the previous year had not been problematic. She referred to the cooperation which usually characterized the work of the Committee and regretted that the Bureau had not contributed more towards solving the problem. She indicated that her delegation would vote against Benin's proposal.

81. **Ms. Valtchanova** (Bulgaria) expressed disappointment at the way in which the Committee had begun its work and said that she, like the previous speaker, would have liked to consult her Government and hear the explanations of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights. Bulgaria would vote against the proposal by Benin.

82. **Mr. Heissel** (Austria) said that he did not like having to take a hasty decision on a matter that had been the subject of consensus at the previous session, especially when, in the absence of explanations by the Office of the High Commissioner, he could not take an informed decision. He was therefore compelled to reject the proposal by Benin.

83. **Mr. Nikuljski** (The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia) said that he would vote against Benin's proposal because the needed consultations could not be held.

84. **Ms. Tolomanoska** (Sweden), taking exception to both the lack of consultation and the prolonged debate on the matter, said that she endorsed the statement made by the representative of Portugal on behalf of the European Union and that she would vote against the proposal.

85. **Mr. Ciorobea** (Romania), regretting the lengthiness of the current debate, said that he, too, would vote against the proposal because he could not consult his Government.

86. **Mr. Xhaferraj** (Albania), criticizing the lack of time and needed resources, said that his delegation would vote against Benin's proposal.

87. **Ms. Kaljulâte** (Estonia), supported by **Mr. Grunnet** (Denmark), who objected to being forced to vote, said that, without consulting her Government, she would have to reject Benin's proposal.

88. **Ms. Pi** (Uruguay) said that she was still waiting for instructions from her Government.

89. **Mr. Aksen** (Turkey), speaking on a point of order, said that the Chairman had not asked if delegations wanted to explain their vote before the vote.

90. **Mr. Hayee** (Pakistan), speaking on a point of order, said that, according to rule 128 of the rules of procedure, a delegation could not take the floor twice before a vote.

91. **Mr. Frick** (Germany), speaking on a point of order, noted that since there were no more general statements, the Committee was free to hear whatever explanations delegations might wish to make before the vote.

92. **Mr. Khane** (Secretary of the Committee) said that the usual procedure was not being followed because the vote was not on a draft resolution.

93. **Ms. Shestack** (United States of America), speaking on a point of order, supported the statement of the representative of Germany and said that she wished to explain her vote before the vote at the following meeting.

94. **Mr. Faati** (Gambia), speaking on a point of order, requested that, in accordance with the rules, the vote should not be interrupted unless there was an objection as to how it was being conducted.

95. *A recorded vote was taken on the proposal by Benin to delete the reference to documents A/62/346 and A/62/347 in document A/C.3/62/L.1/Add.2.*

In favour:

Algeria, Angola, Antigua and Barbuda, Bahrain, Bangladesh, Barbados, Belarus, Benin, Bhutan, Botswana, Brunei Darussalam, Burkina Faso, Cameroon, China, Congo, Côte d'Ivoire, Cuba, Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Djibouti, Egypt, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Gabon, Gambia, Ghana, Guinea, India, Indonesia, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Kazakhstan, Kenya, Kuwait, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Lebanon, Lesotho, Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, Madagascar, Malawi, Malaysia, Maldives, Mali, Mauritania, Morocco, Mozambique, Myanmar, Namibia, Nepal, Nicaragua, Niger, Nigeria, Pakistan, Philippines, Russian Federation, Saint Lucia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Saudi Arabia, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Singapore, South Africa, Sri Lanka, Sudan, Swaziland, Syrian Arab Republic, Thailand, Togo, Tunisia, Uganda, United Arab Emirates, United Republic of Tanzania, Uzbekistan, Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of), Viet Nam, Yemen, Zambia, Zimbabwe.

Against:

Albania, Andorra, Argentina, Australia, Austria, Belgium, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Canada, Chile, Croatia, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, El Salvador, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Iceland, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Japan, Latvia, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Mexico, Moldova, Monaco, Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, Poland, Portugal, Republic of Korea, Romania, San Marino, Serbia, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Ukraine, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United States of America.

Abstaining:

Bahamas, Belize, Bolivia, Brazil, Colombia, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Guatemala, Guyana, Haiti, Honduras, Jamaica, Jordan, Mongolia, Oman, Qatar, Suriname, Trinidad and Tobago, Turkey, Uruguay.

96. *The proposal was adopted by 76 votes to 54 with 20 abstentions.*

97. **Mr. Khane** (Secretary of the Committee) said that, by virtue of Article 19 of the Charter of the United Nations, Liberia had not been authorized to vote.

The meeting rose at 1.40 p.m.

United Nations

A/C.3/62/SR.2

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Held at Headquarters, New York, on Monday, 8 October 2007, at 3 p.m.

Chairman: Mr. Wolfe .... (Jamaica)

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(c) Follow-up to the International Year of Older Persons: Second World Assembly on Ageing

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The meeting was called to order at 3.15 p.m.

Organization of work (*continued*) (A/62/250; A/C.3/62/1; A/C.3/62/L.1 and L.1/Add.1 and 2)

Explanations of vote

1. **Mr. Aksen** (Turkey), speaking in explanation of vote after the vote at the previous meeting on the deletion of references to documents A/62/346 and A/62/347 from the list circulated in A/C.3/62/L.1/Add.2, regretted that the delegations had not been given more time to carefully consider the issue, study the resolutions referred to during discussions on the High Commissioner's mandate, obtain detailed information from the Secretariat and the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), understand past practice and consult their Governments. Turkey had abstained from voting because of the absence of the will to provide time for those essential prerequisites to making a decision.

2. **Mr. Ochoa** (Mexico) said that his delegation and a significant number of others regretted not having been given at least 24 hours to decide. The opportunity to hear why the High Commissioner's Office had presented the reports had been denied. The Committee's work was too important to allow hasty decisions. The procedure by which the reports had been submitted should be reviewed. The States concerned should have been consulted beforehand. Mexico trusted that the Chairman would take all appropriate steps to avoid recurrence of such situations, which were contrary to the spirit of openness and dialogue.

3. **Ms. Al-Zibdeh** (Jordan) stated that Jordan had abstained because very important issues must not be decided hastily. To take a thoroughly and comprehensively considered decision, her delegation should have been able to consult her Government.

4. **Mr. Hagen** (United States of America) expressed disappointment at the hasty manner in which the decision had been taken. General Assembly resolution 48/141 reaffirmed the need "for a continued adaptation of the United Nations human rights machinery to the current and future needs in the protection and promotion of human rights". OHCHR should not only be allowed, but also even encouraged, to bring any human rights issue before the Committee, whether or not a specific report had been requested. That would be in keeping with the Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action, according to which "the promotion and protection of human rights" was "a legitimate concern of the international community". Moreover, the reports in question had been drafted under memorandums of understanding that the Governments of Uganda and Nepal had signed with OHCHR. Lastly, it was troubling that the Committee would so precipitously consider deleting two human rights items without allowing delegations to consult their Governments.

5. **Ms. Maiera** (Brazil) said that the proposal to consider the two reports had caused surprise. As important institutional issues had been at stake, more time should have been provided for debate. Willing to consider any matter related to human rights, her delegation nevertheless understood why the presentation of the reports in an unexpected way had created unease. Not only substance but also procedure should be taken into account with regard to the presentation of reports. In the event, procedure had been particularly relevant because of the institutional implications of the proposal.

6. **Ms. Katabarwa** (Uganda) stated that the vote in support of the African position and in favour of deletion had been a victory not for her country but for respect for procedure in the General Assembly. Uganda had been "ambushed" by the High Commissioner's decision to report on the human rights situation in northern Uganda without showing her report to the Ugandan Government. It was a principle of international justice that all parties should be afforded an opportunity to be heard. It was to be hoped that the High Commissioner would respect procedure. Uganda subscribed to observance of human rights under its Constitution and the international human rights instruments.

7. **Mr. Fieschi** (France) said that he failed to understand why — despite the explanations provided by the Secretariat regarding the mandate of OHCHR, and the African Group's acknowledgement of the Secretary-General's authority to submit reports — the Committee had forthwith decided not to consider the reports in question. Delegations and the Committee were free to decide on such reports. In 2006, the Committee had simply taken note of the report on Uganda. Some delegations' references to sanctions or to the peace process in Uganda in relation to the inclusion of the reports in the Committee's work were disproportionate and could not be taken seriously. With regard to Nepal, the action taken by the Committee in 2006 had set a precedent. Why should past practice be

changed without justification? The arguments advanced had not been convincing. The legitimate request of many countries, large and small, to be given time sufficient for consulting their Governments and taking a decision on an informed basis, after hearing what the High Commissioner had to say, had been rejected. An elementary right of the delegations had been denied and a decision had been taken on the basis of an irrational procedure and of deliberately inadequate information. The deletion did not augur well for the Committee's work. Yet France was ready to forget the matter and carry on in a spirit of open discussion, hoping that others would reciprocate.

8. **Mr. Nikuljski** (the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia) said that the decision to delete the reports had been discouraging. Matters should not be forced when it came to important issues. His delegation had lacked sufficient time to consult his Government and receive instructions. His country hoped that there would be no more such occurrences.

9. **Mr. Babadoudou** (Benin) pointed out that most of the delegations that had requested more time had voted against the motion without waiting for instructions from their Governments. Respect for procedure was important to the African Group. The African Group would oppose any action taken without respect for procedure on issues related to the Human Rights Council.

10. **Mr. Gonsalves** (Saint Vincent and the Grenadines) said it was unfortunate that the issue had come to a vote. Under the circumstances, however, the matter had been correctly decided. Human rights issues should be fully aired before United Nations bodies, including the Committee, but without interfering with the efficacy of those bodies. His delegation agreed with Germany and France that principles should not prevent addressing the substance. However, the issue in question, narrowly construed, had not been a substantive matter; rather, it had been a procedural and jurisdictional question regarding the power of OHCHR, based on an expansive interpretation of its mandate, to effectively co-opt and define the Committee's agenda through the unlimited imposition of unsolicited reports. Nothing in the letter or spirit of resolution 48/141 authorized OHCHR to act of its own accord on such matters. Paragraph 4 of the resolution referred to the obligation of OHCHR to carry out assigned tasks subject to the discretion of the Secretary-General. In the event, voting in favour of deletion had been the only means available to his delegation for encouraging procedural honesty and fundamental fairness and for preventing Member States from feeling "ambushed" by unsolicited additions to the agenda. Mindful of the power of precedent referred to by the European Union representative and others, his country believed that a negative vote would have set an unfortunate precedent.

11. **Ms. Al-Thani** (Qatar) stated that her delegation understood the African Group's position and the important role played by OHCHR. Qatar could have voted in favour of Benin's proposal but had abstained from voting for lack of sufficient time to consult its Government.

12. **The Chairman** said he took it that the Committee wished to approve the programme of work contained in documents A/C.3/62/L.1 and 2, as orally revised and amended subsequent to the vote taken in the previous meeting, together with the provisions contained therein, with the understanding that the programme of work would be adjusted, if that was warranted by the situation.

13. *It was so decided.*

Agenda item 62: Social development

(a) **Implementation of the outcome of the World Summit for Social Development and of the twenty-fourth session of the General Assembly** (A/62/71-E/2007/46, A/62/122 and A/62/128)

(b) **Social development, including questions related to the world social situation and to youth, ageing, disabled persons and the family** (A/62/61-E/2007/7, A/62/61/Add.1-E/2007/7/Add.1, A/62/132, 154, 157 and 357)

(c) **Follow-up to the International Year of Older Persons: Second World Assembly on Ageing** (A/62/131 and A/62/131/Corr.1 (English and Spanish))

14. **Mr. Sha** Zukang (Under-Secretary-General for Economic and Social Affairs), introducing the item, said that, of the three pillars of the work of the United Nations, the Committee dealt directly with two, development and human rights. They were a prerequisite for the third pillar, peace and security, and part and parcel of the activities of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs. Since the 1990s, that common endeavour has focused on attaining the internationally agreed development targets, including

the Millennium Development Goals, and could be described as promoting a society for all. With children as the primary focus, increasing attention had been paid to social integration and cohesion. Deprivation, gross inequality and discrimination undermined the prospects for fulfilling the development agenda and ensuring global stability.

15. Key issues to be addressed by the Committee included poverty and unemployment, and the situation of youth, older persons, women, persons with disabilities and indigenous peoples. Tackling abject poverty was a major component of achieving a society for all. Productive employment was crucial to poverty reduction and social development. That central message of the World Summit for Social Development, held at Copenhagen, had been reaffirmed at the 2005 World Summit. Yet, recent developments in global labour markets had created economic insecurity and inequality, adversely affecting efforts to halve extreme poverty by 2015. Job creation had failed to match the demand for employment and, in many countries, employment quality had deteriorated. Productive employment and decent work for all should be at the centre of economic and social policy.

16. Worldwide, unemployment was disproportionately high among the young. Youth should be integrated into the global economy. In fact, youth development should be a core objective of national programmes and young people should be actively involved in the policy process. Youth, which accounted for about 20 per cent of the world population, contributed greatly to national development and to the global effort to achieve the Millennium Development Goals. Yet, in addition to unemployment, young people currently faced an array of challenges related to reaching responsible and healthy adulthood in a globalizing world. Many, especially young women, often encountered obstacles in accessing health services. In HIV/AIDS-affected countries, young women bore the burden of caring for members of their households.

17. World population ageing reflected lower mortality. Healthy ageing and the ability of older persons to participate in the labour force contributed to welfare and development. Yet, as they became more involved in society, older persons faced specific challenges, such as abuse and discrimination. Older women, in particular, often found it hard to maintain their material independence. There was a need for legislation to protect the rights of older persons and for mechanisms to prevent age discrimination in labour markets and to ensure intergenerational cohesion. The Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing, 2002, set the framework for addressing the challenges and opportunities related to population ageing.

18. International initiatives had drawn attention to violence against women, and to the urgency for action. The United Nations had played a leading role in launching a system-wide initiative to ensure a long-term and comprehensive response, especially by providing support to national efforts. In January 2008 the secretariat for the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women would be transferred to the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights in Geneva, where it would join the six other human rights treaty bodies.

19. The Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, adopted during the previous session of the General Assembly, aimed at eliminating the persistent discrimination and denigration suffered by persons with disabilities. Almost 120 Member States had signed the Convention since it had been opened for signature in March 2007, and, in anticipation of its entry into force, the Secretariat was making extensive preparations to support its implementation at all levels.

20. As the Coordinator of the Second Decade of the World's Indigenous People, he welcomed the adoption of the Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. The Declaration offered a road map for building constructive relationships between States and indigenous peoples and for strengthening the engagement of the United Nations system with issues of concern to indigenous peoples.

21. The United Nations had helped tremendously to forge consensus and specific commitments on development and human rights for all, and that would continue. It had moved decisively towards mobilizing and providing practical support to States in order to help them to translate those commitments into action at the global, regional and national levels.

22. **Mr. Schölvinck** (Director, Division for Social Policy and Development), introducing the Secretary-General's report on follow-up to the implementation of the World Summit for Social Development and of the twenty-fourth special session of the General Assembly (A/62/122), said that the report provided an overview of the discussion held on the priority theme

"Promoting full employment and decent work for all" during the forty-fifth session of the Commission for Social Development. It also highlighted the issue of youth employment and examined several highly relevant issues, including labour mobility and corporate social responsibility. The creation of jobs for young people should be seen within the broader context of poverty reduction and social integration. With respect to labour mobility, the report underscored the importance of socially responsive and inclusive migration policies and of stronger partnerships between recipient and sending countries at the bilateral, regional and global levels, and stressed that the positive contributions of migrants to recipient societies deserved wider recognition. On corporate social responsibility, the report noted growing support for the view that companies should go beyond financial philanthropy to solve social problems.

23. The summary of the Report on the World Social Situation 2007: the Employment Imperative (A/62/168) surveyed the global trends in employment and work, and the socio-economic context of their development over the previous two decades. It examined such areas of concern as jobless growth, the global informalization of the labour market, economic and social liberalization, and migration, and showed how those trends had created greater insecurity for workers. The impact of such trends on social groups and the gender dimension of the changing labour market were also analysed. Recognizing the challenge for policymakers to achieve productive employment for all, the report recommended that Governments should formulate policies and strategies that took demographic and social changes into account. It also emphasized the need for political reforms and legal provisions in order to prevent work-related discrimination, as well as the need to ensure universal social-protection coverage, since increasing numbers of workers operated in employment situations that were casual, informal and outside standard collective contracts.

24. Turning to the questions relating to youth, ageing, disabled persons and the family, he said young people now had numerous opportunities and assets, but that they also faced a complex and rapidly evolving economic and social environment. Increasingly, youth were proving to be key players in the development process; consequently, their full and effective participation at all levels was important to the realization of the Millennium Development Goals and to the implementation of the World Programme of Action for Youth to the Year 2000 and Beyond.

25. The Secretary-General's report on the follow-up to the World Programme of Action for Youth (A/62/61-E/2007/7) reviewed progress made by young people and the constraints they encountered, and highlighted issues pertinent to globalization, employment, education, poverty and hunger. Pursuant to Economic and Social Council resolution 2006/15, Section II of the report presented information on the achievements of the Youth Employment Network in lead countries, and provided an update on the status of national plans for youth employment. In collaboration with United Nations programmes and agencies, the Secretariat had established a broad set of indicators for measuring progress towards implementation of the World Programme of Action for Youth, as a first step towards establishing data on quantifiable core indicators that might enable stakeholders to measure youth development over time, and compare progress within and between countries and regions.

26. He recalled that the Secretary-General's report on the Implementation on the World Programme of Action concerning Disabled Persons: the Millennium Development Goals and synergies with other United Nations disability instruments (A/62/157) had been prepared in response to General Assembly resolution 60/131. The report focused on developments since the previous progress report and was based on the activities and suggestions of Governments and entities within the United Nations system.

27. In reviewing the recommendations and conclusions of the report, he said that an updated report on the status of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities would be considered under agenda item 72 (e) later in the current session. The adoption of the Convention represented a crucial opportunity for consolidating disability-related activities within the United Nations system. The recommendations suggested a possible streamlining of reporting and a review and update of the mandate of the United Nations Voluntary Fund on Disability to make the Fund more responsive. The three main disability instruments, namely, the Convention, the World Programme of Action and the Standard Rules on the Equalization of Opportunities for Persons with Disabilities, reflected the evolution of language and thought surrounding disability issues, and the nomenclature used in the Convention represented

currently accepted practices. The General Assembly might wish to consider promoting the harmonization and updating of language used for disability within the United Nations system.

28. While emphases and approaches differed, there was generally a basic commitment among the members of the international community. Meaningful progress towards establishing fully inclusive societies could be achieved through strong political will and the commitment of States, working with the United Nations system and civil society. He assured the Committee that the United Nations was doing its share in that regard, and he encouraged Member States to integrate disability, as a fundamental principle, into their current and future development-assistance programmes.

29. The report on the follow-up to the tenth anniversary of the International Year of the Family and beyond (A/62/132 and Add.1) addressed the integration of a family perspective into policymaking and national-capacity development. The report contained first-hand information from 25 Member States on their recent follow-up activities. National action had centred on family policymaking and research, and on measures to create a conducive environment for strengthening families. Support measures had encompassed the issues of social services, equality between men and women, the upbringing and development of children, detection and prevention of intra-family violence and reconciliation of work and family life.

30. The United Nations Programme on the Family was also reviewed in the report, highlighting inter-agency cooperation on family-related issues. The recommendations included measures to better integrate a family perspective into national policymaking, including policy-related research, and into the policy outcome documents of the United Nations legislative and consultative bodies such as the Commission for Social Development. Consolidation of international support for national capacity-building to tackle family-related issues was the focus of follow-up activities. In that regard, it was recommended that the General Assembly should encourage United Nations agencies to integrate a family perspective into their activities.

31. Turning to the report on Cooperatives in social development (A/62/154), he said that, according to the International Cooperative Association, cooperatives generated approximately 100 million jobs, and stimulated employment through self-help enterprises and commitment to members and their communities worldwide. The benefits and employment generated by cooperatives provided economic security, particularly in remote areas, and were beneficial to vulnerable groups such as women, youth, indigenous peoples, persons with disabilities and older persons. As self-help organizations, cooperatives also provided livelihoods in post-conflict situations. The report therefore recommended that policymakers should incorporate programmes that optimized the impact of cooperatives on job creation into their development agendas, and should promote the formation of cooperatives in new areas.

32. In the report on the follow-up to the Second World Assembly on Ageing (A/62/131), the preliminary findings from the first cycle of review and appraisal of the Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing had shown the progress achieved since 2002. An increasing number of countries had instituted coordinating mechanisms, many of which included civil society, academia and older persons themselves. Since 2002 the number of national plans of action on ageing and human rights legislation on the elderly had increased significantly. Similarly, the benefits of non-contributory pensions and other low-cost initiatives to support the elderly had been widely discussed at the policy level. Some countries had either set up new programmes or increased payments to older persons within existing schemes.

33. Technical support to Member States in drafting and implementing plans of action on ageing had increased significantly, but much remained to be done. A particular challenge was to focus international cooperation on supporting Member States in their efforts to prioritize ageing within national development. The regional commissions were organizing preparatory conferences in order to analyse, consolidate and eventually present the findings of the national review and appraisal process to the Commission for Social Development in 2008. Although the African and Western Asian regions had relatively lower percentages of older persons at the moment, the regional commissions in those areas would need to become more fully involved in the next phase of implementation of the Plan of Action in preparation for their future large demographic shift. The recommendations of the report presented a number of issues for the consideration of the General

Assembly. The year 2007 marked the fifth anniversary of the Second World Assembly on Ageing and provided a unique opportunity for the international community to assess progress, analyse obstacles and chart directions for the implementation of the Madrid Plan of Action. The year also represented the midpoint in the schedule for the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals. As the Secretary-General had noted in his opening address to the current General Assembly, success had been uneven and, from a development perspective, the goal of social policy was to promote universal social protection and equity.

34. **Ms. Banzon Abalos** (Philippines) said that her delegation was somewhat concerned by the suggestion that the mandate of the United Nations on disability-related issues might be contracted to one single aspect of the entire disability programme. She recognized that the adoption of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities represented an opportunity to consolidate disability-related activities within the United Nations system. However, her delegation did not share the view that the reporting mechanisms should be streamlined in such a way as to place an explicit focus on the Convention. Her delegation naturally welcomed the adoption of the Convention as an additional tool for the advancement of the interests of persons with disabilities, but it did not regard the Convention as a replacement for previous instruments which were equally important and relevant, even if they were not legally binding. It was surprising that the various instruments concerning disability should be considered interchangeable.

35. She also noted that the recommendations on disability-related issues included certain proposals for the consideration of the General Assembly. It was therefore a matter of concern that decisions, such as the renaming of the unit responsible for disability issues within the United Nations, had been taken by the Secretariat before the matter had been fully considered by Member States. She asked the Director of the Division for Social Policy and Development to clarify the Secretariat's intention in that regard.

36. She was of the opinion that the United Nations Voluntary Fund on Disability was currently functioning well under an original mandate that remained relevant. She therefore invited Member States to study the mandate, focusing on the need to strengthen the original intent of the mandate, rather than on recasting it in a manner that diverged from its original purpose.

37. **Mr. Saeed** (Sudan) said that the World Summit for Social Development had established a universal and comprehensive approach to social development, the elimination of poverty, promotion of employment and the strengthening of social integration. Member States had fallen short of their ambition to attain those goals. He pointed out that debt cancellation played a key role in that regard, since the debt burden of States hampered their ability to tackle poverty and promote employment. Noting the tendency of the international community to emphasize human rights over social development, he urged Member States to place greater priority on the social development dimension.

38. **Ms. Zhang** Dan (China) said that, important though it was to follow up the implementation of the Convention, such action should not be taken at the expense of the Standard Rules on the Equalization of Opportunities for Persons with Disabilities or the Programme of Action of the World Summit for Social Development. The three instruments, although complementary, differed in emphasis, some dealing more with human rights and others more with development. It would therefore be sensible to review the mandates of the Convention and the Programme and adopt a more holistic approach.

39. **Ms. Pérez Álvarez** (Cuba), after expressing her support for the statements by the Philippines and China, noted that most of the recommendations in the Secretary-General's report on the follow-up to the implementation of the World Summit for Social Development and of the twenty-fourth special session of the General Assembly (A/62/122) focused on national issues. She wondered whether the Director of the Division for Social Policy and Development agreed that the international financial institutions had a major role to play in the social development of developing countries.

40. **Mr. Schölvinck** (Director, Division for Social Policy and Development), responding to the question, said that the Secretary-General's report contained proposals rather than final answers. With regard to the renaming of the secretariat of the Convention, it had occurred a considerable time before and did not imply any diminution of concern for the Programme of Action or the Standard Rules. He fully supported the suggestion that the mandate of the various instruments should be strengthened. Delegations would also need to consider whether the Special Rapporteur's mandate should be extended to include a role in the

implementation of the Convention. With regard to the point raised by the representative of Cuba, international cooperation was essential, on the part of financial institutions and others. As for the question of debt cancellation, the issue should be dealt with by the Second and Fifth Committees. It did not relate directly to development.

41. **Mr. Amil** (Pakistan), speaking on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, said that employment had a central role in promoting prosperity, poverty eradication, social inclusion and enhanced stability, peace and social harmony. One of the central pillars of the World Summit for Social Development had been to promote the goal of full employment as a basic priority of economic and social policies at both national and international levels. All human beings, regardless of age, sex, race, ethnicity or disability, had the right to employment in conditions of freedom, equity, security and human dignity. There had been no greater challenge to humanity nor greater threat to world peace than the failure to realize the vision contained in the Charter of the United Nations of promoting better standards of life and larger freedoms. Economic growth alone was not enough; poverty must be tackled on a priority basis through a focus on employment-generation strategies.

42. The Group of 77 and China welcomed the continued focus on the various social groups — namely, the family, young people, older persons and persons with disabilities — in the context of social development. Employment and poverty reduction strategies should target marginalized and vulnerable groups in the labour market. Investing in the future through youth employment was vital for social development. Measures should be taken to make young people more responsible, dynamic and self-reliant. The skill and experience of older persons should also be exploited, with a view to making them a driving force in economic development.

43. It was often argued that globalization and interdependence were opening up new opportunities through trade, investment, capital flows and advances in technology for economic growth, development and improved living standards around the world. Major challenges remained, however. Unless the benefits of social and economic development reached all countries, a growing number of people would fail to benefit from globalization.

44. The struggle to promote full employment transcended national frontiers and could be achieved only through a macroeconomic environment based on a coherent set of policies at both national and international levels. Several negative trends in world economic relations impeded development cooperation and employment generation in developing countries, including the decline in official development assistance, the widening divide between the rich and poor countries, rising poverty levels in many countries, the worrying impasse in the Doha trade negotiations and the continued marginalization of developing countries in international economic decision-making. A level playing field must be created and the asymmetries of globalization eliminated to enable all countries to reach their full potential. Measures must be implemented to include the informal sector in social protection programmes and establish incentive structures.

45. The Group of 77 and China wished to highlight the following principles in the interests of full employment for all: (i) the global partnership for development, as set out in the Millennium Declaration, the Monterrey Consensus and the World Summit on Sustainable Development, was essential for greater social and economic stability within and among countries; (ii) development cooperation should assist developing countries in strengthening linkages with global value chains, creating domestic capabilities, diversification and successful labour-intensive export policies; (iii) global partnerships between Governments and the private sector should explore means of promoting corporate social responsibility; and (iv) labour mobility should be encouraged so that both countries of origin and countries of destination could benefit from the positive aspects of globalization.

46. The reform of international economic and social policy to realize full employment and decent work for all would require worldwide political support, the commitment of key global actors and the strengthening of global institutions. It was also inextricably linked to the realization of the Millennium Development Goals and the monitoring of agreed development commitments. The United Nations had a pivotal role to play in ushering in the new development agenda.

47. **Ms. Brás Gomes** (Portugal), speaking on behalf of the European Union, the candidate countries Croatia, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and Turkey; the stabilization and association process

countries Albania, Montenegro and Serbia; and in addition, Armenia, Georgia, Iceland, Moldova, Norway and Ukraine, said that the World Summit for Social Development and the twenty-fourth special session of the General Assembly had been powerful global commitments to social development and landmarks in the achievement of consensus on key goals. The European Union therefore wished to reiterate its commitment to the full implementation of the Copenhagen Declaration and Programme of Action and of the Millennium Development Goals. In spite of some positive developments, the key goals of poverty eradication, full employment, decent work and social integration remained major challenges for the development of stable societies.

48. As recognized in the European Consensus on Development, never before had poverty eradication been more important. It was heartening that the poorest were getting a little less poor in most regions; but it was a matter of serious concern that inequality was also rising. National action plans for social inclusion in European Union member States were intended to combat poverty and social exclusion, which were multidimensional phenomena linked to societal organization. Even in developed countries, pockets of poverty persisted and measures should be taken targeting specific groups. Tackling child poverty was particularly important, since the continuing poverty cycle deprived children, particularly girls, of opportunities for education and health and their related benefits.

49. States should adopt a rights-based rather than a needs-based approach in order to ensure that individuals and families were not overlooked by sectoral policies. Policies should be based on the integrated approach set out in the Copenhagen Declaration and Programme of Action. A global dialogue on social issues among States Members of the United Nations, as equals, was imperative. Poverty-eradication strategies should adopt an interdisciplinary approach, with cooperation between public and private partners, to identify solutions to intersectoral problems Social protection, job creation, non-discriminatory access to employment, rights at work and local development projects were important for the establishment of minimum social standards. Although Governments were primarily responsible for poverty eradication, the European Union would enhance policy coherence so that all its non-development policies, such as trade, security and migration, contributed to developing countries' efforts to meet the Millennium Development Goals.

50. The goal of full and productive employment and decent work was crucial. Since the establishment of the European Employment Strategy in 1997, there had been significant developments in employment and social protection at the European level. Stronger, lasting growth had led to the creation of more and better jobs, although further efforts were needed to reach employment targets. Employment growth had reached 0.8 per cent in 2005, but the European Union would still need to create 20 million jobs to achieve its 2010 target employment rate. Youth unemployment was high and a number of measures were being implemented to increase employability and provide incentives for employers. Although an increasing number of old member States were opening their labour markets to citizens of the new members, labour-market integration of legal migrants needed to become a more explicit component of employment policies.

51. European Union member States were engaged in a complex discussion on "flexicurity" — a strategy incorporating flexibility and security — with a view to increasing the adaptability of workers and enterprises. The point at issue was the exchange of traditional security in the job for security in the market, to be achieved by active labour-market policies, life-long learning and adequate social protection. A balanced approach was required, ranging from the adaptability of businesses to the modernization of social protection. The implementation of the decent work agenda of the International Labour Organization also remained a high priority.

52. Social integration was a key component of the Copenhagen Declaration and Programme of Action. It was particularly important in relation to older persons, persons with disabilities and people in especially vulnerable situations, such as children or women subject to armed conflict, violence, trafficking and other kinds of abuse. European Union member States had therefore made greater efforts to find coordinated solutions. The Union would review the implementation of the Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing. It would also seek to mainstream the issue of ageing in national and regional policies and to change public awareness of the potential contribution of older persons to the economy and society. With longer life expectancy, better use must be made of the experience

and competence of older people. At the same time, demographic ageing was creating serious financial and social sustainability problems for pension schemes, social care and health services. There was consequently a need to invest adequately in health and social infrastructure and to improve public-sector management.

53. The European Union was committed to delivering high-quality social services, which were an important component of the smooth functioning of the economy, through the full integration of women and persons with disabilities in the labour market. Social services were a fundamental pillar of the European social model, since they contributed to social and territorial cohesion, local and regional development and the dynamics of job creation, as well as assisting professional, family and personal life. In that connection, she expressed appreciation of the voluntary work done by churches and welfare organizations.

54. Lastly, she drew attention to the 2007 European Year of Equal Opportunities for All, which was intended to raise awareness of the right to non-discrimination on the basis of sex, racial or ethnic origin, religion or beliefs, disabilities, age or sexual orientation. The prohibition of discrimination was crucial to the full enjoyment of human rights.

55. **Ms. Joseph** (Saint Lucia), speaking on behalf of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM), said that productive employment played an important role in reducing poverty and promoting social development. As the *Report on the World Social Situation 2007* had found, labour markets had been evolving in the direction of greater economic insecurity and inequality. Such inequality was reflected in the emergence of global "jobless growth". Furthermore, the unemployment rate was disproportionately greater among the young, disabled and indigenous persons.

56. CARICOM concurred with the recommendations in the Secretary-General's report on follow-up to the implementation of the World Summit for Social Development and of the twenty-fourth special session of the General Assembly concerning the social impact of employment policies, the importance of equal employment opportunities and the link between youth employment and poverty reduction, social integration and intergenerational solidarity. Her delegation noted in particular the report's conclusion that labour mobility was an indispensable feature of the world economy.

57. CARICOM agreed with the recommendations in the Secretary-General's report on follow-up to the World Programme of Action for Youth to the Year 2000 and Beyond concerning monitoring youth employment, and commended the publication by the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC) of a biennial Caribbean Development Review, which addressed the most salient aspects of social development in the Caribbean region, including issues affecting young persons. CARICOM continued to devise mechanisms to promote the integration of young persons as equal partners in the region's development.

58. CARICOM took note of the Secretary-General's report on the follow-up to the International Year of Older Persons: Second World Assembly on Ageing, particularly, the overview of activities related to the Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing . In the light of its increasing population over the age of 65, CARICOM had adopted a charter on ageing in 1998 to ensure older persons' health and full integration in Caribbean society.

59. CARICOM also took note of the Secretary-General's report on the implementation of the World Programme of Action concerning Disabled Persons and welcomed the adoption of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. CARICOM continued to work towards reducing unemployment among persons with disabilities, eliminating discriminatory practices and promoting equal opportunities for them.

60. CARICOM reaffirmed its support for measures to strengthen the family, consistent with the tenth anniversary of the International Year of the Family, and urged Member States to support the United Nations Trust Fund on Family Activities. CARICOM also supported efforts to facilitate family reunification, especially among migrant workers.

61. **Mr. Mokgothu** (Botswana), speaking on behalf of the Southern African Development Community (SADC), said that eradicating poverty was the greatest challenge currently facing the world. With half of the world's population living on less than $2 a day, and a further one fifth on less than $1, poverty eradication was imperative.

62. SADC would be holding a conference in April 2008 with the goal of promoting poverty eradication and development. Its member States had assumed national ownership of poverty-reduction programmes and continued to make determined efforts to improve food security in the face of persistent droughts and floods.

63. Globalization affected the ability of SADC States to respond to the social needs of their populations. Developing economies required the support of developed countries in mitigating its negative impact. SADC recalled that many countries had benefited from the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD), one of whose major objectives was poverty eradication.

64. Full and productive work for all was crucial for combating poverty and social integration. Strategies to combat poverty in the SADC region included creating income-generating activities and increasing economic diversification and productivity in poor communities. SADC had made a commitment to providing education for all, including opportunities for acquiring skills required in a knowledge-based economy. Small-scale credit was among the most effective tools for improving economic development and poverty eradication. Extending loans to women and young people had been identified as a highly effective way of combating poverty.

65. Very little had been done to incorporate the goals of the Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing into development programmes. Older people in developing countries continued to be overwhelmed by the extra burden of caring for their grandchildren and extended family members orphaned largely as a result of HIV/AIDS. SADC urged the international community to take prompt and concerted action to implement the goals set forth in the Plan. SADC also welcomed the adoption of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, which would promote the development of societies more responsive to the needs of all peoples.

66. Sub-Saharan Africa was the only region which had experienced very little progress in attaining some of the Millennium Development Goals. At the current rate of progress, no sub-Saharan African country would achieve them by 2015. With more international cooperation and greater determination on the part of the affected countries, however, the situation could be improved. SADC therefore called on the developed countries to fulfil their commitments to provide the necessary official development assistance to help them meet the Goals. SADC was committed to doing its part to realize the commitments agreed at the World Summit for Social Development and the twenty-fourth special session.

67. **Ms. Pérez Álvarez** (Cuba) said that none of the commitments undertaken at the World Summit for Social Development had been fulfilled, because of an unjust international order under which rich countries grew richer and inequalities between the North and South continued to grow. The Secretary-General's report on follow-up to the implementation of the World Summit for Social Development and of the twenty-fourth special session of the General Assembly recognized that trade liberalization had had a negative impact on full employment in some countries and that globalization had increased workers' vulnerability.

68. Cuba noted with concern the alarmingly high world unemployment rate reached in 2006, particularly among young persons. Millions of people suffered from hunger, and the increase in the production of agro-fuels could increase their numbers. Furthermore, millions suffered from illiteracy, malnutrition and the lack of drinking water and health-care services. While developed countries discussed how to increase the quality of life of their elderly, many underdeveloped countries strived to guarantee that at least part of the population could reach that phase of life.

69. Since 1959, the Cuban political system had furthered the idea of achieving economic growth with social justice for all. Despite the United States blockade, Cuba's social and economic prospects continued to improve. Cuba had achieved near full employment and a high rate of economic growth. Men and women earned equal pay for equal work. The entire population enjoyed universal social protection. Priority had been given to health-care and teacher training, student work/study programmes and university education for the elderly, among other initiatives. Working mothers enjoyed generous maternity leave and other forms of social support.

70. Cuba attached priority to international cooperation for social development and provided assistance to the other third-world countries. Economic growth alone would not suffice to eradicate poverty. There was a need for the establishment of a

macroeconomic environment conducive to full employment and productive jobs. Developing countries must address the problem of third-world external debt, fulfil their commitments to provide official development assistance and eliminate agricultural subsidies. Only by doing away with the prevailing egoism, lack of solidarity and empty promises would the international community be able to promote true social development.

71. **Ms. van Beest** (Netherlands), speaking as a youth representative, said that she had met many inspiring young people in various countries but had felt disheartened when looking into the situation of young people around the world. Young people's rights were being denied on a vast scale worldwide, yet young people were fully entitled to their rights — it was not a matter of generosity.

72. Though every child had the right to go to school, many young people, girls in particular, had no access to education. Girls accounted for two thirds of children out of school. Equal access to education would give young women an equal chance in the labour market and the confidence to stand up for themselves.

73. On the issue of sexual and reproductive rights, young people lacked access to information and to safe and reliable contraceptives. Lack of access had an impact on maternal mortality, HIV/AIDS, infant mortality and gender equality.

74. In the field of politics, in many countries young people and women were denied the right to voice their opinion and to vote and run for office. Even where women did have that right, they remained greatly underrepresented in decision-making bodies.

75. She called upon all countries to ensure equal access for young people to education, sexual and reproductive rights and equal voting rights. She also called upon the Committee to adopt the Supplement to the World Programme of Action for Youth and to adopt a resolution that includes time-bound targets. Further, she invited the Committee to make a concerted effort to achieve the Millennium Development Goals, especially with regard to gender equality and an improved situation for young people worldwide.

76. **Mr. Saeed** (Sudan) said that the signing of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement in the Sudan, the hoped-for imminent peace in Darfur and the achievement of peace in eastern Sudan had created a favourable climate for development and for fighting poverty and unemployment. The high growth rates experienced by the Sudanese economy in recent years would suffice to permit the elimination of poverty within a short period. Since 2001, the Ministry of Finance and National Economy had been carrying out a poverty-reduction programme. Moreover, a Joint Assessment Mission document issued after the signing of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement provided an overall development framework for the medium term, aimed at lasting peace and development, the elimination of poverty and the reduction of unemployment.

77. Through specific projects, the Sudan's national agencies operating in the social-development field had targeted women, the youth, the elderly and persons with special needs. In the area of employment of young people, particularly graduates, the Council of Ministers had decided in 1998 to establish a committee to promote self-employment projects for graduates. The committee operated through three main mechanisms: small enterprises, absorption projects and transformational training. Its numerous successes had included the establishment of a social development portfolio for graduate enterprises and a risk-guarantee fund. Since the 1960s, the Sudan had had considerable experience in the employment of graduates and, since the 1980s, in farmers' cooperatives. Efforts were being redoubled as the public sector became less able to absorb their growing numbers.

78. The Sudan carried out numerous projects and programmes for the elderly, in keeping with the 2002 Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing. A law on care for the elderly, already drafted and expected to be passed shortly, would represent a great step in the strengthening of the rights of older persons. The Sudan had also been active in the consultations leading to the adoption of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and had been among the first to sign. It had embarked on a major effort to incorporate the text and spirit of the Convention into its national policies and programmes.

79. Despite the many achievements made, the goals set at the World Summit for Social Development were still far from realized. Achieving those objectives would require considerable national capacity-building, which meant international cooperation and coordination through effective partnerships with donor

States, the offering of development assistance and total debt forgiveness for developing countries.

80. **Ms. Kurosaki** (Japan) said that her country had experienced repeated earthquakes in recent years. Despite increasing life expectancy, many of the elderly in Japan were disabled, which placed their lives in peril in the event of a natural disaster. Japan would continue to tackle the issues affecting the socially vulnerable, including older persons, persons with disabilities and children, by paying increased attention to their vulnerability and by sharing information on the subject with its humanitarian partners.

81. Japan considered human security a key perspective of its foreign policy in order to respond to such threats as poverty, environmental degradation, conflict, landmines, refugee crises, illicit drug trafficking and infectious diseases. Japan aimed to create a society in which individuals enjoyed safety, a decent livelihood and dignity, with the support of the United Nations Trust Fund for Human Security and other bilateral schemes.

82. On the issue of disabilities, in 2006 Japan had enacted a law to assist persons with disabilities in seeking employment, as well as a law that would, among other measures, create a barrier-free environment in public spaces such as streets, parking lots and parks. An education law had been amended to provide education tailored to the needs of children with multiple disabilities. In addition, the Government had recently signed the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.

83. As one of the most rapidly ageing countries in the world, Japan intended to continue to implement useful policies and programmes and share its experience with other Member States facing similar problems. To respond to the demographic transformation, the Government was formulating and implementing a comprehensive range of measures relating to work, health, welfare and housing as concerned aged persons.

84. **Ms. Blum** (Colombia) said that, for Colombia, job creation was a central instrument in building a more socially inclusive and equitable society. In 2002 her Government had begun to create favourable conditions for economic revival and productive and decent work. Its actions had led to a reduction in the crime rate and generated confidence in the economic and social environments. Economic and fiscal policies had led to the recovery of macroeconomic and fiscal discipline and had created favourable conditions for investment and new markets for domestic products. As a result, in an environment of renewed confidence, economic growth had risen, and income distribution had begun to improve for the first time in decades. Unemployment had decreased significantly, and minimum wages and average household income had grown.

85. Based on her country's experience, high-impact macroeconomic policies were key in job creation, as was the implementation of programmes aimed at strengthening the capacity of social groups identified as lagging in terms of employment. Such programmes, targeted youth, women, persons with disabilities, victims of internal displacement and demobilized soldiers from illegal armed groups. In order to promote decent work, States must expand social security, strengthen labour qualifications and promote workers' rights. Colombia had seen an increase in workers participating in social security programmes and health insurance schemes, and aimed to achieve universal health coverage by the end of the decade. Strategies to formalize employment in Colombia included consolidation of cooperatives and provision of microcredit to small businesses.

86. The goal in human resources training was to bring workers' qualifications into line with requirements. Colombia agreed with the Secretary-General on the matter of corporate social responsibility as a requisite for decent work, and it felt that private initiative should be coupled with social responsibility. She noted that the United Nations Regional Global Compact Centre for Latin America and the Caribbean was going to be established in Bogotá, Colombia.

87. Colombia considered that, to improve the levels of quality employment, it was essential to increase international cooperation to recognize the role of investment in economic growth and commerce. It called for broadening of the transfer of technology and strengthening of the mechanisms through which the United Nations system could support developing countries on that front.

88. **Ms. Park** Enna (Republic of Korea) said that, despite the unprecedented increase in world wealth, widening income disparities, increasing unemployment, population growth and ageing issues needed to be addressed more systematically. The

United Nations, Member States and stakeholders should prioritize cooperation on those issues and make sustained efforts to reach the Millennium Development Goals and to implement the Programme of Action of the World Summit for Social Development.

89. Her Government found it highly pertinent that both the Commission for Social Development and ILO were focusing on the promotion of full employment and decent work for all, given the central role of employment in eradicating poverty and achieving social integration. Attention should be paid to vulnerable groups such as women, youth, older or unskilled workers, persons with disabilities and migrants.

90. To address the emerging concern of youth unemployment in the Republic of Korea, her Government was providing assistance to vulnerable youth and reinforcing Government coordination in countering youth unemployment. The Government attached importance to youth participation in the economic and social process and in global dialogue. In that context it was planning to host the Second World Conference of Ministers Responsible for Youth, in collaboration with the United Nations, in 2009.

91. The employment situation of persons with disabilities was one of her Government's concerns. Recent legislation prohibiting disability discrimination and ensuring the rights of people with disabilities was designed to encourage employment of such persons. The Government was also working with the private sector to promote the employment of disabled persons, and had recently hosted the 2007 Disabled People's International World Assembly.

92. In order to give foreign workers in the country job opportunities, social security, and human rights protection, in 2004 the Government had introduced an employment-permit system.

93. With regard to ageing, the Republic of Korea was one of the most rapidly ageing societies. To address that serious issue, her Government had developed policies to implement the Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing. They included creating job opportunities, promoting senior-friendly industries and raising public awareness of issues affecting older people.

94. Her Government had continued to pursue economic and labour policies that encouraged the fair distribution of income and sustainable growth, in order to address the polarization of society since the 1997 financial crisis. Her Government was also exerting efforts to improve working conditions for non-regular workers.

95. Her delegation wished to note the remarkable progress made in social development by the United Nations and Member States in recent years, and considered that comprehensive approaches and shared responsibility would lead to social development, the goal of which should be empowering people.

The meeting rose at 6.05 p.m.

United Nations A/C.3/62/SR.3

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Chairman: Mr. Wolfe .... (Jamaica)

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The meeting was called to order at 10.10 a.m.

Agenda item 62: Social development (*continued*)

(a) Implementation of the outcome of the World Summit for Social Development and of the twenty-fourth special session of the General Assembly (*continued*) (A/62/71-E/2007/46, A/62/122 and A/62/168)

(b) Social development, including questions relating to the world social situation and to youth, ageing, disabled persons and the family (*continued*) (A/62/61-E/2007/7, A/62/61/Add.1-E/2007/7/Add.1, A/62/132, A/62/132/Add.1, A/62/154, A/62/157, A/62/357 and A/C.3/62/L.4)

(c) Follow-up to the International Year of Older Persons: Second World Assembly on Ageing (*continued*) (A/62/131 and A/62/131/Corr.1)

1. **Ms. Zhang** Dan (China) said that the expansion of employment was an important element of China's macroeconomic and social development policy. The Chinese Government paid great attention to vocational training and re-employment of laid-off workers, while also working continuously to improve its unemployment insurance system. Thanks to China's rapid economic growth, 5 million unemployed workers had been re-employed in the past year, and the urban unemployment rate now stood at 4.1 per cent, below the world average. Her Government had also made vigorous efforts to improve the social security system with a view to establishing by 2020 a system that would cover all urban and rural residents. That would give China the world's largest social security system, covering more than 20 per cent of the global population.

2. Ageing was an acute problem for China, and safeguarding the rights and interests of the elderly was a great challenge. Over the past two decades, numerous laws and regulations had been put in place and ageing-related programmes had been implemented, creating a framework for a comprehensive legal and policy system for the ageing population. She hoped that the five-year review of the Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing would lay a foundation for future action by her country on the issue. She also hoped that the adoption of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities would foster more complete implementation of the World Programme of Action concerning Disabled Persons.

3. **Ms. Gendi** (Egypt) said that social development was a priority for Egypt and underlined the importance of ensuring its full enjoyment by all peoples, but especially those in developing countries.

4. Full employment and decent work for all was a cornerstone of poverty eradication and social integration. The rise in unemployment around the world in the last decade had increased poverty and caused social disintegration, prompting growing migration of the global labour force and leading to brain drain from developing countries, as well as an increase in extremism, violence and crime. Combating unemployment was therefore essential for social stability. However, unemployment could not be overcome without tackling its underlying causes, which included external debt, disease pandemics, poor education, unqualified labour and low productivity.

5. The African continent had tried to deal with the problem by implementing the Declaration and Plan of Action on Employment and Poverty Alleviation, adopted at Ouagadougou in 2004. However, the international community bore equal responsibility with the developing countries for strengthening efforts towards the achievement of higher levels of social development, full employment and decent work for all. It had a role to play in enhancing Africa's capacity for job creation, upgrading the skills of its human resources and supporting its countries in achieving the Millennium Development Goals. Developing countries, especially those in Africa, needed assistance in formulating national social and economic policies to strengthen sectors of production that might absorb a larger proportion of the labour force, particularly young people. Increased national and international financial resources were needed for that purpose, either through official development assistance or through domestic and foreign investment.

6. Assistance should be provided in particular to small enterprises, which were a major source of job creation. Special attention should also be given to guaranteeing a minimum wage and safeguarding workers' health and safety as essential conditions for economic and social security, which were threatened by the radical decrease in official development assistance for enhancing social services and infrastructure in Africa.

7. Egypt was striving to keep unemployment to a minimum through comprehensive national policies

aimed at raising the quality of education to international standards and providing training in fields that were essential to development. It had made significant strides towards gender equality in employment, and had also strengthened small enterprises; promoted business partnerships between Government, the private sector and workers; and improved social and health services for workers, all as part of an ambitious strategy for political, economic and social reform based on the concepts of social partnership and inclusion, diversity and joint effort.

8. **Mr. Ehrling** (Sweden), speaking as the youth representative of Sweden, said that young people should be viewed as a resource for innovation, development and economic growth. Half the world's population was under 26 years of age. Everyone must realize the potential inherent in that statement. The youth of the world deserved to be included in society and to have power over their own fate. Youth-led organizations could give them such power.

9. The greatest challenge facing his generation was climate change. As his country's youth representative, he felt proud of Sweden's efforts to promote a new global climate charter. Present and future generations needed an agreement stronger than the Kyoto Protocol. Swedish youth organizations would build on the Government's efforts by inviting fellow young people to a global conference on climate and security. That, he hoped, would be a first step towards involving young people in formulating global solutions to climate change.

10. Unemployment among young people was a huge challenge for all countries, regardless of location or development status. It led to social alienation and powerlessness. Young people just entering the job market sometimes needed special support, such as informal and vocational education, as a complement to formal education. Civil society organizations could help young people to realize their potential by giving them experience working in the non-profit sector, which could subsequently be put to use for jobs in commercial enterprise.

11. The global society was a reality, and outdated visa policies should not be allowed to stop people travelling to or searching for work in other countries. The right to freedom of movement enshrined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights need not be at odds with the national security of nations. However, some people crossed borders not for work or holiday but in order to survive. Some fled from countries where people were killed for no other reason than loving a person of the same sex. A person's sexual preference should therefore be considered grounds for asylum.

12. The world could not afford to go on wasting the resource of youth. Young people were the key to development. He proposed that the Member States should adopt the goals and targets for the cluster "youth and the global economy" of the World Programme of Action for Youth to the Year 2000 and Beyond.

13. **Ms. Rom** (Switzerland), speaking as the youth representative of Switzerland, said that realizing the potential of youth in a global economy meant guaranteeing their rights under the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, in particular three of those rights. First, everyone had the right to a decent standard of living, yet nearly half the young people in the world subsisted on less than two dollars a day, and not all of them lived in developing countries. In Switzerland, for instance, almost half of all social assistance recipients were children and young people. Fighting youth poverty was not only a moral duty but was in the best interest of societies, since it would contribute to social and political stability. Governments must acknowledge the problem of youth poverty, collect data on it and take action to ensure that young people enjoyed their right to a decent standard of living; they should work for that purpose in collaboration with young people themselves, who wished to be equal partners in the development of their societies.

14. Second, all young people had the right to education, which was essential if they were to become successful members of society. However, in some parts of the world girls and young women were frequently denied an education, and in many European countries Roma children of both sexes lacked equal access to the education system. Third, young people should enjoy the right to social protection. In developing countries, an estimated 85 per cent of young people were employed in the informal sector, where they were highly vulnerable to exploitation and dangerous working conditions. Microinsurance schemes could provide social protection, helping young people to

break out of the vicious cycle of poverty and vulnerability.

15. Laws guaranteeing young people's rights to a decent standard of living, education and social protection must be enacted, including legislation compelling non-State actors such as international corporations and financial institutions to fulfil their social responsibilities. A special effort must be made to eliminate all forms of discrimination against girls and young women and other vulnerable or marginalized groups. The World Programme of Action for Youth was an instrument for realizing the rights of young people; however, it did not cover all the major areas of importance today. She therefore called on Member States to adopt the proposed supplement to the World Programme (A/C.3/62/L.4).

16. **Mr. Romero-Martínez** (Honduras) noted that the Committee had before it numerous important issues, all of which deserved Member States' greatest attention. One was the protection of migrants' human rights, as highlighted in the Ministerial Declaration of the Group of 77 adopted in September 2007. Migrants were human beings who often migrated in search of a better life, and they deserved full respect and solidarity. Another critical issue was poverty and action to combat unemployment. Yet another issue deserving of the utmost attention was prevention and treatment of HIV/AIDS. Indifference to the problem must be overcome, and international efforts to address it must be stepped up. The First Lady of Panama led a global coalition of first ladies which was working to that end.

17. His delegation wholly supported efforts to achieve gender equality and uphold the rights of women. The United Nations should be the standard-bearer for the full and effective implementation of women's rights in every corner of the world. Member States' commitment to the family must be absolute. The needs of mothers and children — which were inextricably linked — ageing and disability were tangible realities that demanded swift and concrete action. Youth represented the present and the future of a better world and deserved special attention, as did protection of the rights of indigenous peoples.

18. As President of the Executive Board of the United Nations International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women (INSTRAW), he was pleased to report that the Institute was overcoming its financial difficulties; he nevertheless urged Member States to continue supporting INSTRAW through voluntary contributions, which were its lifeblood.

19. **Mr. Del Rosario Ceballos** (Dominican Republic), speaking on behalf of the Rio Group, said that productive employment and decent work for all were key elements for development and should therefore be a priority for international cooperation. The Rio Group countries were committed to their achievement, and to that end had instituted national policies and strategies, including social dialogue as an indispensable mechanism for promoting consensus and commitment. Unemployment was one of the principal causes of poverty, but the number of poor workers clearly showed that employment alone was not enough to ensure a decent standard of living.

20. Latin America and the Caribbean remained the most unequal region on the planet. Although most of the countries were middle-income countries, a large proportion of their populations still lived in poverty. While the countries of the region were taking steps to tackle the problem, in order to achieve the desired results, the international community should devise effective strategies for promoting economic growth, including improving fair competition through the elimination of subsidies and other international trade distortions. In Latin America, there was growing strategic cooperation between countries in a wide array of development-related areas, through technical cooperation, the exchange of best practices and other tools of South-South cooperation. Globalization obliged countries to work together to solve common problems and to continue developing mechanisms of international cooperation. The Rio Group attached particular importance to the commitment by the developed countries to devote 0.7 per cent of their gross national product to official development aid.

21. The private sector and civil society should be more involved in the design and implementation of strategies aimed not only at eradicating poverty and hunger but also at addressing other problems that affected vulnerable groups, particularly children and young people, older persons, persons with disabilities, migrants and indigenous peoples. Unemployment among young people remained a priority challenge to which the international community should respond by developing innovative and effective alternatives such as those proposed in the report of the Secretary-General (A/61/122), including the development of

small and medium-sized enterprises and the formation of cooperatives as a means of creating jobs.

22. The Rio Group wholeheartedly supported the Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing and reiterated its commitment to protecting the rights and dignity of persons with disabilities, welcoming the adoption of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and its Optional Protocol. Finally, the Rio Group recognized the important contribution of migrants to the development of their countries of origin and destination and called on all States to ensure that their human rights were protected, regardless of their immigration status.

23. **Ms. Al-Thani** (Qatar) said that an ambitious social development agenda was being implemented in Qatar, centred on human resource development and respect for the human rights of all citizens. The areas of increased investment in infrastructure and social services included the family, young people, the elderly and persons with disabilities.

24. The United Nations Programme on the Family should focus primarily on improving national capacities for family policy development through collaboration between Member States, the United Nations system, civil society and other relevant actors, thus contributing to the attainment of the objectives of the International Year of the Family. Qatar was a sponsor of a draft resolution on the family at the current session, which sought to promote capacity development and to seek consensus rather than political divisions.

25. The Doha International Institute for Family Studies and Development had recently been established in Qatar with a view to addressing issues of global concern and supporting United Nations initiatives pertaining to the family. It aimed to focus on developing pragmatic measures that were beneficial to all countries, regardless of ideology.

26. With regard to youth, her delegation agreed with the recommendation in the Secretary-General's report (A/62/61) concerning the need to formulate national policies on youth and the labour market and to identify national priorities for action. Qatar had elaborated a national strategy for youth for the years 2008 to 2013 designed to achieve those goals, building on efforts under way since 2006.

27. The reports of the Secretary-General relating to social development rightly emphasized the need for capacity-building at the national level. Qatar stood ready to cooperate with United Nations programmes relating to the family, youth and ageing, particularly in the field of institutional development.

28. **Ms. Jahan** (Bangladesh) welcomed the Secretary-General's report contained in document A/62/122, but said it was disheartening to note that inadequate progress had been made in implementing macroeconomic policies for employment growth and poverty reduction. More attention needed to be given to the situation of the rural poor and those who lacked social protection in the informal sector, particularly women.

29. Increased labour mobility had become an indispensable feature of the global economy, and policies in that area needed to be socially responsive and inclusive. For many developing countries, including Bangladesh, temporary labour migration helped to alleviate poverty. Given the close link between migration and development, renewed international efforts were necessary to facilitate the free movement of labour. In that regard, it was to be hoped that the necessary impetus would be given to the Mode IV negotiations in the World Trade Organization (WTO).

30. Bangladesh remained committed to achieving progress in all spheres of social development, in line with the objectives set out at the World Summit for Social Development and the Millennium Development Goals. In particular, an eight-point strategic agenda for accelerated poverty reduction was being implemented under the Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (PRSP), covering employment, nutrition, education, local governance, maternal health, sanitation and safe water, criminal justice and monitoring. Bangladesh had adopted a people-centred approach to development, combining public action, private initiatives and community mobilization.

31. Both the Government and civil society in Bangladesh recognized the central role of the family in development. Various family planning programmes had led to improvements in maternal health and substantial reductions in the birth rate and the child mortality rate. Microcredits granted to over 12 million people had contributed to poverty reduction. Bangladesh would be happy to share its experience in that regard with any

interested countries. It also stood ready to support any United Nations initiatives pertaining to family issues, in line with the recommendations in document A/62/132. International cooperation, together with capacity-building at the national level and through the United Nations Trust Fund on Family Activities, could help meet the goals of family policies.

32. Bangladesh had signed the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and was in the process of ratifying it. However, developing countries would urgently need technical and financial support from the international community in order to implement it fully. Some 90 per cent of children with disabilities in developing countries could not attend school. It was therefore essential to mainstream disability issues into the international development agenda. Bangladesh had a national policy for persons with disabilities and had adopted the Disability Welfare Act in 2001. The Government had taken a number of steps to improve the situation of disabled persons, including the establishment of a quota for disabled persons at all levels of the civil service, the provision of financial assistance and the introduction of specialized education programmes and facilities.

33. Ageing remained a significant problem for developing countries. International cooperation and capacity-building were vital to the full implementation of the Madrid Plan of Action. "Active ageing" policies could be useful in order to keep older people in the labour force in accordance with their capacities and preferences. However, developing countries lacked the resources for such initiatives; technical cooperation among Member States was therefore vital. In Bangladesh, some 5 million people were over the age of 60. The Ministry of Social Welfare was working to implement the poverty eradication component of the Madrid Plan of Action, including through the establishment of pension schemes.

34. Illiteracy among young people, particularly young women, was a significant problem. To improve the situation of the 45 million young people in Bangladesh, the major share of the national budget was allocated to education, which was free of charge up to grade 12. Bangladesh had achieved gender parity in primary and secondary schools, in line with the third Millennium Development Goal, and had the highest primary school enrolment rate in the developing world. Efforts were under way to promote adult literacy and non-formal education. In addition, the Government had adopted a national youth policy, in line with the World Programme of Action for Youth to the Year 2000 and Beyond. Her delegation endorsed the Secretary-General's observations in document A/62/168 regarding the need to promote employment opportunities for young people. In that context, it was necessary to introduce policies for the reduction of income inequality, the promotion of job security and the equitable distribution of the benefits of economic growth.

35. Social development was a collective responsibility at both the national and international levels. The international community must therefore strengthen its efforts to supplement national initiatives through the involvement of all stakeholders.

36. **Archbishop Migliore** (Observer for the Holy See) said that, at the 1995 World Summit for Social Development in Copenhagen, States Members of the United Nations had affirmed the need to attack the structural roots of poverty, reduce inequality and marginalization and achieve full social integration. Subsequently, the focus of the international debate had shifted to global action to eradicate extreme poverty through the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals, the need for equity in financial and trade relations and various factors that generated or exacerbated poverty.

37. While that debate was important, it should be remembered that economic policies could not be separated from social policies if the goals of either were to be achieved. The years since the Copenhagen Summit had seen an increase in inequality between rich and poor and developed and developing countries, as well as within individual nations. In general, the benefits of global economic growth had not reached the poorer segments of society.

38. Only a few States had achieved the right balance between success in the global economy and the preservation of social protection. In many countries, both rich and poor, new forms of poverty had appeared, such as the loss of social relationships and networks among vulnerable groups. The Copenhagen Summit had foreseen those problems; for that reason, the Copenhagen Declaration and Programme of Action continued to be relevant.

39. While the responsibility for social equity lay primarily with Governments, the international community had a part to play by creating trade and

financial conditions favourable to the growth of all national economies, assisting States in the development of policies to benefit the disadvantaged, promoting solidarity and empowering the poor.

40. Education formed the basis of all social policies. Its value went beyond economic development and the fulfilment of basic needs: it enabled individuals and peoples to establish relationships founded on mutual respect. It also bolstered action to combat corruption, which eroded the economic opportunities of the poorest, and helped create a legal framework that allowed the development of free enterprise while safeguarding the social and economic rights of all.

41. The eradication of poverty and the full enjoyment of basic social rights by all constituted a moral commitment. They should therefore be enshrined as the goals of all economic and development policies and as the measures of the success or failure of those policies.

42. **Ms. Aromaa** (Finland), speaking as the youth representative of Finland, said that young people had a key contribution to make to development and should be given an active role in combating climate change for tomorrow's world, which was being created by the decision-makers of today. They must not only be offered opportunities to participate in decision-making affecting their own lives but also have access to education and employment. In addition to formal education, non-formal education through youth organizations provided young people with the skills needed for them to assume responsibility in their communities. Unemployment, however, could hinder their integration into society. International organizations, national Governments and youth organizations should therefore work together to identify concrete ways and means of progressing on that front. The Secretary-General's Youth Employment Network and its Youth Consultative Group offered a good example of such cooperation.

43. Stressing that youth participation should not be a privilege of the happy few, she called on all Member States to honour the commitments made within the framework of the World Programme of Action for Youth. Lastly, she urged them to take every possible action to reach a binding and strict agreement on the reduction of emissions, which was crucial for the planet and for the survival of future generations.

44. **Mr. Yousfi** (Algeria) said that the various reports of the Secretary-General on the issue of social development showed that the Copenhagen Declaration remained highly relevant, since its aims were far from being achieved. Although some progress had been made, poverty and unemployment continued to affect many regions of the world, in some cases fuelling violence and extremism which threatened international peace and security.

45. With a view to creating 2 million new jobs by 2012, his Government had introduced a number of programmes to help young people, new graduates and the unemployed find work, and a microcredit scheme aimed primarily at women. Those initiatives had already borne fruit: unemployment had fallen from 17.7 per cent to 12.3 per cent between 2004 and 2006. In addition, full social insurance coverage was guaranteed for all workers and their dependants. While Governments bore primary responsibility for the provision of full employment and decent work for all, international cooperation also had an important role to play in combating poverty and inequality by promoting a fair trade system, a favourable environment for investment and the free movement of capital and persons.

46. The problem of ageing affected developed and developing countries alike and was set to become more acute in the coming years. The situation of older persons, who continued to contribute to society even after they stopped working, should therefore remain a priority concern.

47. Disabled persons continued to face prejudice and discrimination which hampered their social integration. The Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities was therefore a welcome development which would help improve the situation of disabled persons and protect them from discrimination. Algeria was proud to be among the first signatories of the Convention and its Optional Protocol.

48. **Ms. Viotti** (Brazil) said that her Government was committed to the social development goals established at the Copenhagen Summit and the twenty-fourth special session of the General Assembly and had adopted policies aimed at combining social development and economic growth. The "Fome Zero" (Zero Hunger) programme was aimed at hunger eradication and poverty reduction, while the "Bolsa Família" income transfer programme had helped lift 11 million families out of poverty. In addition, new forms of consumer lending were making credit

available to large sections of the population for the first time. Such initiatives were helping to build a more equitable and inclusive society and were contributing to economic growth. Unemployment had reached its lowest level since 1997, and more than 8 million jobs had been created in the past four years. The number of people affected by poverty had fallen significantly, and the first Millennium Development Goal was about to be achieved in Brazil, 10 years early.

49. The National Programme for Youth Inclusion would assist some 4 million young people aged 15 to 29 who had left school with few qualifications by providing them with financial support to complete their basic formal education and undertake professional training. Under the University for All Programme, established in 2004, more than 160,000 scholarships had been awarded in 2007, with a further 180,000 to be awarded in 2008.

50. In 2003, Brazil had adopted legislation governing the rights of persons over the age of 60. The Government's plan for the elderly included action to prevent violence and promote social inclusion. In addition, more than 1 million Brazilians over the age of 65 received allowances to supplement their family's income.

51. Brazil planned to invest over 1 billion dollars over the coming three years in programmes to benefit its 24 million disabled persons, such as a programme for the provision of special education facilities. The Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and its Optional Protocol were expected to be ratified by Congress in the near future.

52. In the spirit of international cooperation, Brazil had launched the Action against Hunger and Poverty initiative in 2004, together with France, Chile and Spain. The first result of the initiative had been the establishment of the International Drug Purchase Facility (UNITAID), designed to provide access at reduced prices to drugs for HIV/AIDS, malaria and tuberculosis.

53. In line with the eighth Millennium Development Goal, Brazil called for a truly global partnership to overcome structural obstacles to growth and development. Good governance would not suffice to reduce poverty. The national efforts of poorer countries must be supported by official development assistance from developed countries and access to their markets, together with a financial architecture that was more favourable to development.

54. **Mr. Rachkov** (Belarus) said that the importance of social development in the work of the United Nations had been underlined in many important documents, such as the 2005 World Summit Outcome. At the same time, social conditions varied from one country to another; therefore, national measures to promote social development were also needed. Unemployment and social inequality were major obstacles to socio-economic development and required greater attention from States.

55. For more than 10 years, his Government had been implementing a policy of promoting economic growth while providing for the social needs of the population. Gross domestic product (GDP) was growing at an annual rate of over 10 per cent, and a sound social protection system was in place. According to a recent European Commission report Belarus had one of the lowest levels of unemployment in Europe, currently 1 per cent, against a backdrop of rising wages. Efforts to create jobs and promote entrepreneurship were focused on small and medium-sized towns and rural areas, with microfinance playing a key role.

56. His Government was taking action to promote the employment of persons with disabilities by compensating employers for the purchase of special equipment needed to accommodate disabled employees and by providing vocational training and grants for unemployed disabled persons. Measures were also being taken to expand employment in the agricultural sector through the establishment of new "agricultural settlements", the provision of further training and the promotion of independent businesses in rural areas.

57. Education and literacy were key contributors to socio-economic development. Annual expenditure on education amounted to 6 per cent of GDP, exceeding the level of spending in many developed countries. According to the *State of World Population 2007* report issued by the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), Belarus had one of the lowest levels of illiteracy in the world: only 1 per cent of women over the age of 15 were illiterate, while the incidence among men in the same age group was zero. Secondary education was free, and higher education was available free to all on the basis of competition. Special emphasis was given to ensuring equal educational opportunities for rural and urban youth.

58. Social policy in Belarus traditionally focused on measures to care for older persons, especially veterans of the Second World War. Four national laws and five State programmes were in place to provide older persons with social protection and an adequate standard of living.

59. Lastly, his delegation supported the Secretary-General's recommendations regarding the need for universal social protection coverage and the importance of placing decent work for all at the centre of economic and social policymaking.

60. **Ms. Köberle** (Germany), speaking as a youth representative of Germany, said that in 2007 two events had marked the minds of young people in her country and throughout the world, namely the holding of the G-8 Summit and the attainment of the midpoint for the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). Throughout the year, young people had organized their own alternative summit meetings to raise their concerns about equality, the eradication of poverty and basic education for everyone. They believed that States had to seek multilateral responses to those challenges and to do so within the framework of the United Nations system. Young people could not accept that success in secondary school and at university should depend on social or family background; they demanded equal opportunities for all, and especially for disabled young people, migrants and minorities. The Roma, for example, continued to be the minority most subject to discrimination in Europe. Young people would be able to make better use of their potential, secure decent employment and overcome poverty if there was greater investment in both formal and non-formal education.

61. **Mr. Mack** (Germany), speaking as a youth representative of Germany, said that young people also wanted equal opportunities to benefit from globalization. International youth exchange was a prime means of combating racism and building peace, but visa restrictions prevented all but a few from crossing borders legally. The young were the world's greatest resource, but they needed to be empowered. They and their organizations were often one step ahead of politics and should be given a chance to participate in political life. The inclusion of youth delegates in the deliberations of the General Assembly should set an example for youth participation at local, regional and national levels.

62. He urged Member States to increase their efforts to achieve the Millennium Development Goals by 2015 and also to ratify and implement the Convention on the Rights of the Child. He appealed for a strong commitment to the United Nations Habitat Youth Fund and encouraged Governments to support the non-formal education work of youth-led organizations. Lastly, he called on delegates to adopt the supplement to the World Programme of Action for Youth, as recommended by the Economic and Social Council (A/C.3/62/L.4).

63. **Mr. Lauritzen** (Denmark), speaking as the youth representative of Denmark, said that the collective progress of Member States towards the attainment of the Millennium Development Goals did not match their responsibilities and promises. To take the Goals forward, new tools and new ideas were needed, and for that reason youth had an essential part to play in the process. The Goals were the beginning, not the end, of global action: they had been created to serve future generations and were especially important to young people, who would be the leaders of tomorrow's world. Young people today were truly global citizens and had the energy and enthusiasm needed to make the world a better place; they wanted to assume the responsibilities that came with the opportunities offered by globalization. In Denmark, youth organizations across the political spectrum had, with the support of the Government and Parliament, set aside their ideological differences in order to sign together a Millennium Development Goals proposal, which could serve as a model for all Member States. He called on nations to work for, with and through young people in pursuing the Goals, combating poverty and disease and securing development and prosperity around the world.

64. **Mr. Dacri** (Italy), speaking as the youth representative of Italy, said that, because of competition and rapidly changing economic structures, there was a need for continuous innovations, not only in the economic sphere but also at the social and cultural level. Young people had an active part to play in both the national and international arenas and required high-level training to that end. International organizations set an example in that respect, as evidenced by the many United Nations system training centres operating in the city of Turin and the European Union's Erasmus programme.

65. In education as in other sectors, institutional cooperation was essential in order to implement the

recommendations contained in the Secretary-General's report on the follow-up to the implementation of the World Summit for Social Development (A/62/122). Indeed, the Italian Government had recently recognized the importance of coherent youth policies and had set up a ministry with special responsibility in that area. The ministry had a coordinating role and acted within the framework of the National Youth Plan, which addressed the cultural, social and economic aspects of youth policies.

66. Economic policies must be specially geared to young people, with private sector support, in order to facilitate their access to employment, while education and training must take into account the needs of the labour market. The National Youth Plan accordingly sought to help young people to participate in the information society by narrowing the digital divide and to develop connectivity and Internet access, in particular through soft loans. In the same spirit of supporting the innovative potential of the young, the United Nations might wish to recommend the establishment of dedicated funds to develop their design skills and creative flair. He concluded by saying that the participation of youth representatives in the General Assembly's discussions should encourage Member States to support national youth councils and forums and involve them in decision-making on youth issues.

67. **Mr. Al Bayati** (Iraq), referring to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, said that human rights were the basis of human existence. Universal, interrelated and indivisible, they were moreover central to all that the United Nations hoped to achieve in the area of peace and development. For its part, the Government of Iraq was endeavouring to establish fresh development policies with the ultimate aim of strengthening the Iraqi economy and increasing prosperity. It was also seeking to improve living standards and reduce poverty through a variety of social assistance measures and the socio-economic development of rural and remote areas. Such development plans, however, were hampered by the country's difficult security situation, which had also contributed to higher unemployment. The terrorist activities of Al-Qaida and remnants of the former regime made matters even worse, targeting as they did Iraq's infrastructure and its professional classes in particular, which had adverse economic consequences in view of the resulting brain drain and flow of capital abroad.

68. Responsibility for addressing the security issue extended to include the international community. The Iraqi Government was nevertheless making efforts to create stability and improve family life with the assistance of up-to-date information and statistics on households. To that same end, coordination was also continuing among the relevant ministries and with various Arab and international organizations, including the United Nations, and the major goals of full productive employment and decent work for all were being incorporated into the country's development policies and strategies, which demanded the mobilization of all available resources. Another important measure was the five-year International Compact with Iraq (ICI), aimed at building a secure, unified, federal and democratic nation, pursuant to which the Iraqi Government was committed to combating corruption, establishing a solid budgetary framework and strengthening national institutions.

69. In short, his Government was determined to extricate Iraq from its current predicament and produce a key change in development policies. It also looked forward, however, to international assistance for the reconstruction and development of a new Iraq. Goodwill, open minds and mutual respect were moreover vital ingredients for the return of the Iraqi people to the international fold.

70. **Mr. Llanos** (Chile) said that social protection policies were needed, in addition to economic growth, in order to alleviate poverty and address the needs of vulnerable members of society. Growth did not always generate employment. Indeed, statistics showed that, both in Chile and worldwide, as economic growth increased, job creation decreased. Furthermore, the generation of employment did not necessarily mean socially protected and better paid jobs. Nor did economic growth automatically lead to lesser income inequality, which was shown by the Gini Index to be unaffected by wide variations in growth rates. The prime concern must therefore be to ensure a State system of social benefits for all citizens throughout their lives, giving them access to education and employment and protection against ill health and disability. In the context of globalization, social protection must be a core thrust of State action.

71. Chile had made significant advances in poverty reduction in 17 years of democratic governance, with the proportion of those living below the poverty line falling in that period from 40 to 13.7 per cent of the population. It had achieved that result through a three-pronged system of social protection. Under the "Chile solidario" programme, it provided social benefits for street people, elderly persons living by themselves and other groups at risk. Under the "Chile Crece Contigo" programme, it provided early childhood protection, particularly in low-income households or in families with working mothers, offering them free day-nursery facilities and ensuring the universally recognized rights of all children. The third prong consisted of the guarantee of socially protected employment for men and women and the introduction of a universal pension system. Through the adoption of all those measures, the Government of Chile was overcoming poverty and had practically attained all the Millennium Development Goals. He stressed that the example of his country showed how much could be achieved when the State played an active role in implementing social policies to combat poverty and provide social protection for all citizens, particularly the most vulnerable.

72. **Mr. Makanga** (Gabon) said that his country fully subscribed to all international commitments in the area of social development and had, accordingly, introduced a policy to assist disabled persons and those living in poverty, including older persons.

73. His Government had adopted legislation to protect disabled persons in Gabon, estimated to be about 10,000 in 1997. Its assistance was twofold, consisting of material aid, in the form of orthopaedic and other equipment, as well as financial aid, in the form of a special allowance. To respond to persons with special needs, it had established a national school for children with hearing problems and a unit for the mentally handicapped in the Libreville regional hospital. At the international level, it had signed the agreement establishing the African Rehabilitation Institute (ARI) and the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and its Optional Protocol. The Government's main aim was to guarantee the independence of disabled persons and integrate them into society.

74. In line with the Madrid International Plan of Action, adopted in 2002, the Government has undertaken to implement strategies to prevent the marginalization of older people to ensure that they would be cared for by their family or, alternatively, specialized institutions. Its aim was to create an "ageless society", in accordance with its tradition of respect for older persons.

75. In addition to those measures to protect vulnerable groups of the population, the Government had just overhauled its social security system with a view to providing universal health coverage and had set up a National Sickness Insurance Fund. Extreme poverty was one of the most serious challenges facing the world. In that connection, the launching of the Millennium Development Goals Africa Steering Group was a very positive step. Despite all their efforts, African countries still suffered from a lack of resources. The fact that Gabon had been classified as a medium-income country placed it in a particularly difficult position because it no longer benefited from facilities granted other developing countries and devoted 40 per cent of its budgetary resources to reimbursing its debt.

76. **Ms. Nerland** (Norway), speaking as the youth representative of Norway, said that lack of access to clean water and safe sanitation was one of the greatest challenges facing the world and had an enormous impact on the lives of millions of children and young people. In negotiations within the General Agreement on Trade in Services (GATS), certain States were requesting that water services should be liberalized and opened up to foreign corporations. However, there had been many examples of rising prices and reduced access to water in countries with privatized water systems. Water was not a commodity that could be easily replaced by another. The problem was not privatization as such. Unfortunately, business considerations often took precedence over the best interests of individuals, including children and young people. Any decision-making process concerning the use of water should include the population as a whole.

77. Young people should be allowed to make informed decisions about matters affecting their lives, in accordance with the Convention on the Rights of the Child, and Governments should take steps to ensure that their voice was heard at the local, regional and national levels.

78. Finally, Member States should be encouraged to support financially the "Opportunities Fund for Urban Youth-led Development", established by the Governing

Council of the United Nations Habitat and Human Settlement Foundation (UN-Habitat).

79. **Ms. Dikáčová** (Slovak Republic), speaking as the youth representative of the Slovak Republic, said that more than two thirds of young people were living in Africa and Asia and that many of them had no access to primary education, good health and fundamental human rights. Others were facing social instability, a lack of financial resources and other obstacles such as racism or xenophobia, all of which had a negative influence on their participation in the economic and social system.

80. Young people were able to devise original and innovative solutions and act as key stakeholders in various areas of social and economic life. They should therefore be given the opportunity to be equal partners in decision-making processes at all levels. To that end, she called on Member States to grant young people access to education corresponding to the needs of the labour market and to create societies that showed respect for fundamental human rights.

81. She also urged Member States to implement the recommendations contained in the Secretary-General's report, entitled "Follow-up to the World Programme of Action for Youth to the Year 2000 and Beyond" (A/62/61/E/2007/7).

82. **Mr. Kingston** (New Zealand), said that his Government had three strategic priority themes for the next decade: economic transformation; national identity; and families — young and old. The latter had five interdependent sub-themes, one of which was "positive ageing". All those themes informed Government-wide planning processes.

83. The Government's commitment to the "families — young and old" priority theme had resulted in additional funding for programmes to assist older people, including increased funding for home-based support services and residential care.

84. New Zealand had established an Office for Senior Citizens in 1990 which led, monitored and promoted the New Zealand Positive Ageing Strategy. It also developed policy to protect the rights and interests of older people.

85. New Zealand recognized the importance of consulting regularly with older people in the community on policy development issues. By encouraging them to continue participating in their communities, it ensured that all New Zealanders benefited from their valuable knowledge, skills and experience.

86. **Mr. Groom** (Australia), speaking as the youth representative of Australia, said that climate change was one of the greatest concerns of young people throughout the world. Young people were able to adapt their behaviour more easily than others, and the world should harness their energy by strengthening the role of education and training in global climate change solutions. For example, Australian youth had embraced the need to reduce water shortage as a result of widespread water education in schools.

87. In Australia, a number of young people were mobilizing to help others less fortunate than themselves, such as indigenous youth and new migrants. Many young people belonged to the Australian Make Poverty History movement. However, there were still many marginalized young people who felt isolated from society, and they needed attention, especially at the United Nations. He hoped that the resolution entitled "Supplement to the World Programme of Action for Youth to the Year 2000 and Beyond" (A/C.3/62/L.4) would be adopted.

88. The Australian Government's Youth Ambassadors for Development Program (AYAD) had enabled 2,100 young Australians to make a positive contribution to development throughout the Asia-Pacific region. It was important that young people should feel that the United Nations was listening to them, and the youth delegate programme was an important step towards that goal. He urged all Member States to consider including a youth representative in their delegations to the United Nations.

89. **Ms. Asmady** (Indonesia) said that people-centred development, a key message of the 1995 World Summit for Social Development, remained as relevant in 2007 as then. Although the world had made great efforts to implement the Programme of Action adopted at the Social Summit, it was important not to lose sight of the uneven progress across and within regions.

90. Climate change was a daunting challenge, and the United Nations Climate Change Conference, scheduled to be held in Bali in December 2007, would provide a much-needed opportunity for international cooperation on that issue.

91. Indonesia was concerned about the economic insecurity of migrant workers, especially women workers, in labour markets throughout the world and urged States to promote equal rights and opportunities for that category of workers.

92. For its part, Indonesia was committed to social progress and was earmarking the largest share of its development budget to education, health and anti-poverty programmes. It had also taken steps to promote cooperative activities by developing small and medium-sized enterprises.

93. Believing that a nation's prosperity and a healthy family structure were inextricably linked, Indonesia had adopted a twin strategy combining individual efforts of families with Government policy. Through its national action plan on disabilities, it continued to raise the public's awareness of disabled persons as productive members of society, and it also dispensed vocational training. The National Commission on Ageing worked closely with the Ministry of Social Affairs in highlighting issues related to ageing at the national level and cooperated with provincial governments at the local level. The Government also recognized the role of young people in poverty eradication and sought to empower them through various initiatives such as the Youth Employment Network.

94. Indonesia welcomed the adoption of the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and its Optional Protocol, to which it was a signatory. It called on the international community to comply with its commitment to put an end to the existing economic insecurity and inequality brought about by globalization. The United Nations should continue to advocate the strengthening of national capacity as a core contribution to achieving the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), and it was vital that there should be coherence between the Commission for Social Development, the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) and the General Assembly.

The meeting rose at 1.05 p.m.

United Nations A/C.3/62/SR.4

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Summary record of the 4th meeting
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Chairman: Mr. Wolfe .... (Jamaica)

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The meeting was called to order at 3.05 p.m.

Agenda item 62: Social development (*continued*)

(a) Implementation of the outcome of the World Summit for Social Development and of the twenty-fourth special session of the General Assembly (*continued*) (A/62/71-E/2007/46, A/62/122 and A/62/168)

(b) Social development, including questions relating to the world social situation and to youth, ageing, disabled persons and the family (*continued*) (A/62/61-E/2007/7, A/62/61/Add.1-E/2007/7/Add.1, A/62/132, A/62/154, A/62/157 and A/62/357)

(c) Follow-up to the International Year of Older Persons: Second World Assembly on Ageing (*continued*) (A/62/131 and Corr.1)

1. **Mr. Antonio** (Angola) reaffirmed his Government's commitment to the outcome of the World Summit for Social Development and of the twenty-fourth special session of the General Assembly, in particular, the goal of full and productive employment and decent work for all. His delegation noted with concern the rise of youth unemployment, the persistence of discriminatory practices at the workplace, the difficult working conditions in the informal sector, the lack of balance in opportunities created by globalization and the continuing gender inequalities in the global labour system. It welcomed the adoption of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.

2. Angola had been making considerable efforts to increase access to education, combat illiteracy and promote employment, particularly among women, young persons and persons with disabilities, through investment in infrastructure and administrative reform. It had also established technical and vocational training centres in an effort to decrease unemployment and poverty among young persons.

3. Social protection reduced the economic vulnerability of poor people. His Government had made steady progress in providing such protection, including in the area of nutrition, education and basic health care. It had been working with the private sector, particularly the oil and diamond industries, to provide additional social protection systems. Notwithstanding the central role played by the State in fostering social development and poverty alleviation, the private sector should take some responsibility for social protection, which was limited or ineffective in most poor countries. Social investment was the best means of promoting motivation, reliability and productivity among workers as well as combating vulnerability in the labour market.

4. **Mr. Nguyen Tat Than** (Viet Nam) said that economic and social development must be more inclusive and equitable. His delegation noted with concern that unemployment rates in many parts of the world remained high, especially among young persons. Economic growth did not always go hand-in-hand with equitable social development or increased employment. "Jobless growth" posed serious challenges to the attainment of full employment.

5. His Government was implementing measures to fulfil the goals set forth in the Copenhagen Declaration on Social Development and Programme of Action of the World Summit for Social Development which covered vulnerable groups such as the elderly, children with special needs, persons with disabilities and persons living with HIV/AIDS. Viet Nam's national employment programme was aimed at generating some 1.5 million jobs each year, driving down urban unemployment and increasing vocational training. It had succeeded in raising per capita income and reducing the poverty rate in 2006. Much remained to be done, however, to achieve more inclusive social and economic development. Priority was currently being given to improving the lives of the poor through improved infrastructure, irrigation, land use, access to social services and credits. One of the most pressing issues facing Viet Nam was the surplus labour resulting from the ongoing process of offering shares of former State-owned enterprises to the public. His Government had recently adopted legislation to assist laid-off workers, including unemployment insurance and assistance in finding new work.

6. His Government was working with the International Labour Organization (ILO) to promote sustainable employment and had received assistance in developing labour legislation, reducing poverty through the development of small and medium-sized enterprises, enhancing labour safety and other areas. It called on the international community to work towards the establishment of an equitable economic environment in accordance with the Millennium Declaration and Monterrey Consensus.

7. **Mr. Pancras** (Thailand) said that full and productive employment and decent work for all was crucial for social development. The issue of youth employment deserved particular attention. His delegation noted with concern the disproportionate share of unemployed young persons in the world labour market. If the problem was not addressed, unemployed young persons would be vulnerable to alienation, ideological manipulation, substance abuse and various forms of delinquency. Employment must go hand-in-hand with education and entrepreneurship. His Government attached priority to promoting universal access to quality education.

8. Genuine social development required societies which were strong from within. The institution of the family was at the core of every advanced society and provided for needed social safety nets during crises. The international community should give greater emphasis to traditional family structures, which were being challenged by increased urbanization and migration. His Government had adopted national strategies for long-term strengthening of the institution of the family.

9. The potential of persons with disabilities was an important driving force for social progress. His Government had therefore actively participated in the negotiations on and adoption of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and was currently taking the necessary legislative steps to ratify the Convention. Meanwhile, it was necessary to consolidate disability-related mechanisms within the United Nations system to avoid duplication and ensure the efficient use of resources. Lastly, his Government was working to ensure that the elderly population could continue to contribute to the development of Thai society.

10. **Ms. Kulzhanova** (Kazakhstan) said that social development issues must remain a priority for the principal bodies of the United Nations. Member States must make a firm commitment to the timely and full achievement of agreed development goals, including the Millennium Development Goals. Unemployment remained one of the most pressing challenges to development and poverty eradication. Her delegation shared the view expressed in the report of the Secretary-General on follow-up to the implementation of the World Summit for Social Development and of the twenty-fourth special session of the General Assembly (A/62/122) that the lack of social protection in the informal economy hampered social development. There was a need to strengthen national statistical programmes for data collection in that area.

11. Youth unemployment continued to be a major challenge. As young persons were the most likely segments of society to migrate in search of a better future, there was a need for more detailed study of youth migration. His delegation also believed that the family played an important role in social development. Greater attention should be given to family protection, and a family perspective should be incorporated into international efforts to promote the rights of children and young persons, the elderly and women.

12. In the past five years Kazakhstan had succeeded in maintaining a high level of economic growth and raising living standards. Her Government continued to increase social spending, on health care, education, employment and in other areas. It had enacted legislation to address unemployment, provide decent work and increase the standard of living of the population.

13. Her Government was undertaking reform of the pension system and instituting compulsory individual health insurance with a view to improving the lives of older persons. It had also given special attention to the needs of persons with disabilities. In conclusion, she said that social development, the well-being of the population, poverty eradication, education and decent employment were key elements for preserving global collective security and peace.

14. **Mr. Muradov** (Azerbaijan) speaking as the youth representative of Azerbaijan, said that young people represented a major force in global, social and economic development. Governments should therefore find more effective ways of involving them in the development of their countries and treating them as equal partners in the process of achieving the Millennium Development Goals. The Goals, which were interconnected, could be achieved by 2015 if Governments and civil society showed the political will to do so.

15. The year 2007 had been proclaimed Youth Year in Azerbaijan. Policies and programmes targeting young people remained at the core of the country's social development policy, with the emphasis on youth employment, support for young families and social integration programmes for vulnerable groups, such as young people with disabilities. It was gratifying to be

able to report that, as a leading member of the Youth Employment Network, Azerbaijan would host the Fourth Youth Employment Summit in 2008. A 2002 law on youth policy had recently been amended in order to improve social and economic opportunities for young people. A youth fund was to be established and youth houses set up to provide special services to young people nationwide. Favourable bank credits and loans would be issued to young families. The Government had also adopted a State programme on education abroad, under which some 5,000 young people would be able to study for new professions, such as computer engineering, in developed countries. The programme would be sponsored by the Azerbaijan Oil Fund.

16. Azerbaijan continued to face challenges as a result of the conflict with Armenia. Measures were being taken to help young people who had suffered from displacement, economic and social insecurity and psychological trauma. He paid a tribute to ILO, the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) and the TakingITGlobal network, which provided valuable assistance to youth initiatives in Azerbaijan. Lastly, he expressed the hope that more young people would be able to participate in future sessions of the General Assembly and become real partners of Governments in meeting the challenges ahead.

17. **Mr. Vohidov** (Uzbekistan) said that his Government attached great importance to social development. Strong social protection was among the basic principles of the Uzbek model of development. His Government had carried out several programmes for the protection of the family, women, children, the elderly, disabled persons and other groups and allocated a large share of its national budget to social security. It gave particular attention to the most vulnerable segments of society. The traditional local government authorities known as *makhallya* played an important role in fostering social protection.

18. His Government had proclaimed 2007 the Year of Social Protection. Within that framework, a range of measures were being carried out to enhance social protection, prevent wide income disparities and promote a kind and tolerant social environment. His Government had adopted a wide range of social legislation, including on charitable activities, iodine deficiency prevention and workers' compensation. Employment policies had resulted in the creation of more than 1 million jobs, most involving small business. In the light of the large share of the population under 18, his Government was implementing youth employment programmes. New labour and employment legislation was being enacted to take into account such demographic factors. Uzbekistan was making concerted efforts to achieve the goals set forth at the major international conferences on social development and at the twenty-fourth special session of the General Assembly and to improve the well-being of the population.

19. **Ms. Gallardo Hernández** (El Salvador) said that her country was resolved to implement the commitments set out at the World Summit for Social Development and the Millennium Summit, in particular the Millennium Development Goals. Progress made in communities and enhanced at the national level was expected to generate employment and income at the local level, improve access to and quality of basic services and promote the participation of civil society through decentralization. Social development was a long-term undertaking which required macroeconomic stability and the establishment of a climate conducive to the human, geographical and territorial integration of the majority of Salvadorians.

20. It was crucial to ensure the well-being and training of El Salvador's human capital and meet its basic needs regarding health, education, employment, housing, social cohesion, family integration and environmental protection. The country's social plan included a series of programmes targeting the most vulnerable members of society, especially in rural areas. Employment was a key to prosperity and social stability. As a post-conflict country, El Salvador focused on promoting youth employment, a prerequisite for poverty reduction, and therefore sought to improve access to education. Skill-building and training programmes were under way. The private sector played a fundamental role in social development. El Salvador had recently ratified the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and its Optional Protocol, essential social policy instruments that would benefit the elderly. The family was central to Government policy and action.

21. **Mr. Chabar** (Morocco) said that his country, resolved to fulfil the commitments made at the World Summit for Social Development and the 2005 World Summit and attain the Millennium Development Goals, had formulated a social development strategy to that end. With the personal involvement of

King Mohammed VI, Morocco had taken measures to reduce poverty and unemployment on the basis of social solidarity. Non-governmental organizations (NGOs) optimized such measures in the areas of social action and training. On the initiative of Morocco and Switzerland, the Human Rights Council had recently adopted a resolution on the United Nations declaration on human rights education and training. It was to be hoped that all countries would support the draft declaration, a valuable contribution to the international regulatory human-rights framework.

22. Morocco's literacy strategy concerned 1 million people. It also provided for the enrolment of 60,000 children who were not attending or had dropped out of school, especially in rural areas, and for assisting needy schoolchildren. The objective was to reduce illiteracy to less than 20 per cent by 2010. A special programme was aimed at helping needy female pupils to continue their studies. The Mohammed V Foundation financed training programmes for disabled people and the construction, renovation and outfitting of related centres. In order to ensure women's full participation in social development, Morocco had reformed its family law, a significant contribution to the country's evolution to a modern society based on a culture of human rights.

23. A national initiative for human development (INDH) had been launched in Morocco in 2005 to reduce poverty and social exclusion in rural and urban areas through diversified measures promoting income-generating activities, capacity-building and assistance to people living in particularly precarious conditions. The initiative, which had a 2006-2010 budget of over $1 billion and targeted hundreds of particularly underprivileged rural communities and urban neighbourhoods, comprised a dynamic network of associations and local government bodies and addressed needs identified by the beneficiaries. The network enjoyed international recognition. The African Conference for Human Development had been held in Rabat in April 2007 to promote human development as a prerequisite for the continent's sustainable development. Migration issues, which had an impact on social development, could best be treated at the economic level through co-development and the generation of employment. Transparency and good governance were keys to the success of social policy.

24. **Mr. Emadi** (Islamic Republic of Iran) said that, despite the commitments made at Copenhagen and reaffirmed in subsequent United Nations conferences, young people without privilege and wealth still struggled to get a foothold in the labour market, while older persons enjoyed less and less security after a lifetime's work. In some countries, 80 per cent of persons with disabilities were jobless, while indigenous peoples and migrants continued to face discrimination in the labour market. Accordingly, full employment and decent work for all and the improvement of the lives of older persons, young people, indigenous peoples and persons with disabilities should be the major collective objectives.

25. The main areas of concern regarding unemployment — jobless growth, global informalization of the labour market and economic and social liberalization — constituted socio-economic trends which led to increased insecurity for workers. Socially responsive and inclusive migration policies should be implemented. Employment creation for youth should be seen in the broader context of poverty reduction and social integration. The participation of young people at all levels was crucial to the attainment of the Millennium Development Goals and other international targets.

26. The Government of the Islamic Republic of Iran had made significant efforts towards accomplishing the goals set by the World Summit for Social Development and United Nations plans and programmes pertaining to social development at the national level. Relevant activities had included measures for improving health, reducing poverty and providing job opportunities; a comprehensive social security system; and steps focused on ensuring a fair income distribution and improving the quality of life of vulnerable population segments. To that end, Iran had launched the privatization of State-owned enterprises, including the public sale of 80 per cent of the equity of the major State companies and the distribution of such stock to poor and low-income people free of charge.

27. **Ms. Eilon-Shahar** (Israel) said that, in view of the role of productive employment in reducing poverty and promoting social development and social integration, nations possessing appropriate expertise had a responsibility to participate in combating poverty. Israel looked forward to the policy segment on "promoting full employment and decent work for all" at the next session of the Commission for Social Development. The main responsibility of Governments was to promote social and economic equity and reduce

dependency on the welfare system. To that end, enhanced national action and international cooperation were essential. Nearly all the activities of MASHAV, the Israeli Centre for International Cooperation, were aimed at social or sustainable development.

28. Referring to the emphasis that the Secretary-General's report (A/62/168) placed on the need for policies focused on socio-economic security, she said that Israel had stimulated economic activity and significantly reduced unemployment by allocating resources to infrastructure development and by direct intervention in the labour market, including job creation, reduction of labour costs and provision of wage subsidies. Moreover, Israel promoted capacity-building at the local level through cooperative partnerships.

29. Although as a whole women's participation in the workforce had improved, results had been mixed in the case of migrants. A notable increase in women migrants in low-wage jobs had led to higher degrees of exploitation, violence and trafficking. As a country absorbing migrant workers, Israel made a particular effort to facilitate social integration, and specific legislation existed in Israel to protect the rights of migrant workers. Despite greater opportunities for youth to participate in global development, particularly in countries with easier access to the media and communication technologies, challenges existed with regard to the number of young adults leaving their family and community framework as a result of learning disabilities, difficulties in adapting to the communal structure, social conditions, lack of emotional support and the regional security situation. Remedial measures taken by Israel in that regard included vocational learning and placement in workplace settings.

30. Persons over the age of 65 accounted for approximately 15 per cent of Israel's population, and their number increased at twice the population's overall rate of growth. In the framework of the Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing, Israel cooperated with the elderly in such areas as legislative policy, planning and provision of services. Community-based services were developed through partnerships and joint activities with the elderly population sector. In Israel, services had become more equitably accessible and adapted to the various population groups, regions and cultures, including the Arab population and immigrants from Ethiopia and the former Soviet Union. In the light of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, the relevant domestic legislation was under review, disability-related study and training centres were being created and a monitoring mechanism was being developed.

31. **Mr. Sergiwa** (Libyan Arab Jamahiriya) said that despite the commitment of the international community to implement the objectives of the World Summit for Social Development, unemployment, intense poverty and other social problems covered in the report of the Secretary-General (A/62/168) continued to afflict the developing countries. His delegation called on the developed countries to meet the obligations undertaken at the Copenhagen Summit and in the Millennium Declaration. They should create favourable economic conditions for development, remove obstacles to the right to development and adopt measures that would ensure a net flow of financial resources to the developing countries, since economic and social rights were closely interlinked.

32. Unemployment among youth could not be ignored. His country had launched a programme in 2006 to advance African youth, children and women through the provision of food and medicines and the establishment of health, educational and training institutions that would make an effective contribution to the welfare and education of those groups. In 2007, his country had established a fund for assistance and development in Africa, providing food, clothes, blankets and medical supplies to States affected by drought and flood.

33. His country had also hosted the International Youth Forum held in Benghazi on 21 and 22 August 2007. The Declaration adopted by the Forum had included proposals aimed at encouraging young people to engage in political life and participate in decision-making and establishing mechanisms that would support young people, create work opportunities for them and facilitate their access to loans for small and medium enterprises.

34. His country, which had played a pioneering role in the declaration of 1981 as the International Year of Disabled Persons, welcomed the adoption of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities at the sixty-first session. It also supported the adoption of the Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing,

which ensured that the elderly were included in the development programmes of their countries.

35. **Mr. Tun U Thaung** (Myanmar) noted that, more than a decade after the 1995 World Summit, the world unemployment rate had increased. Economic growth alone could not enhance employment. National and global policies focused on job creation and poverty reduction were urgently needed. Unemployment was most acute in the developing world. Although about 84 per cent of the global labour force was found in the developing countries, employment opportunities there were considerably fewer than in the developed economies.

36. In the context of social development, poverty reduction strategies should take into consideration the young, aged, disabled, marginalized and vulnerable members of society. Youth in particular not only accounted for approximately 20 per cent of the world population, but also represented the future of nations. Contrary to earlier hopes, globalization had failed to benefit developing countries through direct foreign investment, and liberalization had not generated new opportunities through trade and investment. Advances in technology to improve living standards throughout the world had failed to materialize. Globalization sometimes entailed uncertainty for workers who relied on jobs generated by foreign direct investment. Job insecurity was compounded by unilateral sanctions and coercive measures with a negative impact on the economy of the countries concerned and their most vulnerable population groups.

37. The Government of Myanmar strove to attain the Millennium Development Goals, including eradication of poverty and hunger, through a national plan utilizing the country's own resources, and had developed a number of programmes designed to narrow the socio-economic development gap between rural and urban areas. Those programmes had significantly contributed to poverty alleviation and enhanced employment opportunities, particularly in rural and remote regions.

38. **Mr. Kinyanjui** (Kenya) said that the issues of poverty eradication, full and decent employment and social integration could not be credibly addressed without adequate resources, fair international trade, access to markets and technology and an environment that encouraged partnerships. In its bid to attain the Millennium Development Goals, Kenya attached great importance to gender equality, youth development and social inclusion. A number of legal, structural and institutional frameworks and mechanisms had been established, in conjunction with civil society and the private sector, in order to ensure that all Kenyans were involved in the development process.

39. Despite pledges and commitments made at major conferences and summits, the level of effective development cooperation and financial assistance was low. The achievement of full and productive employment and job creation in many countries had been seriously hampered by a lack of resources. It was therefore imperative to mobilize such resources, including new and additional funds, to enhance the efforts of developing economies, such as Kenya, in confronting adversity. Access to economic tools, transfer of technology and the full participation of all sectors of society, including in the political process, was essential.

40. Although the Kenyan economy had registered an unprecedented growth rate of 6.1 per cent and output had risen, unemployment, informal and self-employment and short-term contractual employment were on the rise. Investment in education, health care, social protection and skills training were important keys towards building a society in which all people could contribute effectively to the common good. In that regard, the Government's policies regarding free primary and secondary education, maternal and child health care and the provision of free antiretroviral drugs were expected to improve the living standards and educational level of Kenyans.

41. The Government had also initiated a pilot project on social protection with plans to adopt a comprehensive policy on ageing. Similarly, a National Plan of Action for Youth Policy, addressing eight priority areas, including employment, education, environment, empowerment and participation, had been launched. Although youth constituted about two thirds of the economically active population, they also accounted for 61 per cent of the unemployed. Unemployment in Kenya was not simply a lack of jobs, but also a lack of appropriate infrastructure and the means by which to acquire skills. One billion Kenyan shillings had been earmarked during the financial year 2006-2007 for the Youth Development Fund (YDF), which had been introduced by the Government, in collaboration with civil society and the private sector, to increase the access of young entrepreneurs to loans.

The Fund was regarded as a radical intervention, and its management structures and guidelines were being developed in consultation with youth, financial intermediaries and other partners.

42. Kenya believed practical solutions must be identified in order to raise people out of abject poverty and disease and to give them a life of dignity and self-worth. Such steps included providing predictable resources, implementing initiatives that were tailored to needs and involving the beneficiaries themselves at each phase in the process.

43. **Ms. Moss** (Panama) said that the Government of Panama had formulated a number of social policies to enhance capacity-building and to guide development policies towards greater social well-being. She detailed the work of the Ministry of Social Development in overseeing the technical and operational coordination of the *Red de Oportunidades* (Opportunity Network), aimed at strengthening human resource capacity, and at providing health and education services.

44. Panama had introduced anti-discrimination labour legislation, and had promoted measures to regularize the civil status of persons who might have been previously disenfranchised, thereby granting them greater access to benefits. She described a number of steps taken to promote social policies in favour of youth and literacy and to protect vulnerable groups, such as persons with disabilities. Panama had been the second country to ratify the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and its Optional Protocol, and as a sponsor of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous People, remained committed to the right of indigenous people to development and to improving their economic and social status, free from all forms of discrimination.

45. Public information campaigns had been launched to sensitize the general population on the subject of delinquency, violence and street crime, which had become a major concern of Panama. The constitutional principles regarding the punishment of minors established jurisdiction for the protection of minors and offered them a special regime of custody, protection and education.

46. The objectives and achievements at the domestic level had demonstrated the efforts of the Panamanian Government to fulfil its obligations undertaken at the World Summit on Social Development in 1995. Both the Government and civil society were committed to achieving a more efficient, democratic and participatory society and better quality of life for all Panamanians.

47. **Mr. Sen** (India) said that although the role of productive employment in achieving the goals of the World Summit for Social Development had been widely acknowledged, the current global situation showed that many regions had been plagued by setbacks and were far from achieving the Millennium Development Goals. A number of developing countries faced the challenge of counteracting jobless growth and reconciling market forces with the objective of a decent work agenda. Direct anti-poverty programmes were necessary as a measure of social protection. Workers in the informal sector should also be brought within the ambit of social protection systems. Continued dependence on agriculture and high demographic growth made the challenge of full employment and decent work even more difficult to achieve.

48. At its highest level, the Government had acknowledged the need for a more inclusive growth process that raised the incomes of the poorer sectors of the populations and generated expansion in decent employment, while ensuring access to essential services such as health and education. Employment growth in India had risen to 2.6 per cent between 1999 and 2005, outpacing population growth. The generation of employment had been one of the most important objectives of India's economic development plans, and particular attention had been paid to encouraging activities with high employment potential, such as construction, transport and information technology. Priority had also been placed on micro and small enterprises, which currently employed 29.5 million persons and contributed to approximately 35 per cent of the country's manufacturing output and 34 per cent of exports.

49. In addition to various programmes, a number of employment generation poverty eradication programmes were being implemented. Another notable initiative was the National Rural Employment Guarantee programme, which established the right to work as a fundamental right: the equivalent of 100 days' wages was assured to every rural household, thereby creating a social safety net, and the programme provided improved infrastructure and access to health services in rural areas.

50. India had recently ratified the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, as an important step towards executing the constitutional mandate to develop an inclusive society. In the same vein, he expressed his delegation's support for the Madrid International Plan of Action and mentioned the establishment of the National Council for Older Persons, which exercised an advisory and coordinating role in the formulation and implementation of policies and programmes for older persons.

51. **Ms. Sow** (Senegal) said that in formulating its national development strategy, the Government of Senegal had paid particular attention to the improvement of people's living conditions through various social and economic strategies that were based on community development and assistance. In spite of economic growth, social indicators pointed to tension in social relations, due in particular to urban spread, social adjustment programmes and devaluation, all of which accentuated upheavals in family and social structures.

52. In that regard the recommendations of the World Summit for Social Development, the programme for the First United Nations Decade for the Elimination of Poverty, the Millennium Development Goals and the New Partnership for Africa's Development had served as a frame of reference for Senegal's efforts to combat poverty, and had largely contributed to some improvement. Nevertheless, poverty eradication remained a key concern. The Government had decided to establish a strong economic and social policy aimed at improving the situation of the most vulnerable groups and strengthening social cohesiveness and integration within the framework of development. Responsibility for that policy lay with the Ministry of Women's Affairs and Social Development, which had instituted programmes for action to be undertaken by State bodies, development partners and other social actors. As part of its poverty-reduction effort, the Government had launched a series of long-term programmes to strengthen national mechanisms for equity and social justice; to coordinate and evaluate action aimed at the most vulnerable sectors of society, specifically women, children and persons living with AIDS; and to consider issues pertaining to exclusion.

53. Senegal attached great importance to the family, and in that regard, a number of measures had been adopted to ensure the stability of family structures. Efforts had been targeted at addressing sociocultural values, care for the elderly by families, pension funds, the establishment of centres for the treatment of mental illnesses and social integration and rehabilitation centres for persons with physical disabilities.

54. Older persons were covered under a substantial health plan, and all persons with physical or mental disabilities received appropriate attention and sustained assistance. The Government was deeply committed to the total eradication of poverty, but the Millennium Development Goals were still in the distance. In closing, she took the opportunity to launch a solemn appeal to all African countries and their international partners to continue their joint efforts aimed at lifting Africa out of its current predicament.

55. **Ms. Halabi** (Syrian Arab Republic) said that, at the World Summit for Social Development in Copenhagen and at the twenty-fourth special session of the General Assembly, all States had made the commitment to promoting the goal of full employment, had agreed upon the vital necessity of eliminating poverty through decisive national measures and international cooperation and had recognized that stability, security, justice and the protection of human rights were prerequisites for social integration.

56. On that basis, his country had established national goals and specified a time frame in which to accomplish them. The tenth five-year plan for development (2006-2010), which formed the pivot of his country's human development policy, emphasized production and sustainable economic development combined with the just distribution and continual increase of income and linked macroeconomic policies to the creation of employment opportunities, which would lead to a number of institutional and legal reforms. Emphasis would be placed on enhancing performance in the human development sectors, improving social services, developing the infrastructure and implementing programmes for balanced regional development, poverty alleviation and the generation of employment opportunities.

57. His Government's social policy focused on empowering young people and adolescents. That focus was an important tool with which to draw the map of the future, in view of the unprecedented risks that young people faced in a world of rapid change. His Government sought to adapt education and training so that young people were equipped to face the challenges of the era; enable the family to contribute fully to

supporting young people; expand the choices and employment opportunities available to young men and women while eradicating all forms of exploitation; and enable young people at all levels in society to participate in public life, decision-making and the design of plans and programmes in areas affecting them.

58. A national plan of action for the health and social protection of the elderly existed and an inter-ministerial national social welfare committee for the elderly had been established, led by the Minister of Health. A family protection unit had also been established. His country had recently signed the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. Policies for the protection of the elderly, the family and the disabled secured them financial, health and social support, raised awareness and provided for the necessary research in order to ensure that they led a decent life. A social protection network plan had also been established, linked to the development of social protection programmes and the provision of direct material assistance to families in need.

59. His country attributed particular importance to the creation of an enabling environment for social development. However, the complicated process of achieving social development depended on the international as well as national factors. The provision of an enabling environment in the region was impeded by, inter alia, foreign occupation, instability, policies of siege and isolation and disregard for the rights of peoples to development and decent work. Social integration and development were incompatible with the foreign occupation of 40 years, which had caused the subjection of his fellow citizens in the occupied Golan and their expulsion from their homes and deprived them of employment opportunities, education and health protection.

60. His delegation would have hoped that the report of the Secretary-General on goals and targets for monitoring the progress of youth in the global economy had taken into account all the obstacles confronting young people under occupation and that the 2007 Report on the World Social Situation had benefited from the International Labour Organization reports on the negative impact on employment of foreign occupation.

61. **Ms. Makhumula** (Malawi) said that the nexus between economic growth, employment and poverty reduction was increasingly gaining recognition. In Malawi, the agricultural and informal sectors accounted for a significant share of total economic activity; and, since many young people worked in those sectors, they were closely involved in policy development and programme implementation. They were also given access to microcredit.

62. The Government had adopted the Malawi Growth and Development Strategy, which aimed at poverty reduction through sustainable economic growth. In addition to formal education programmes, Malawi was promoting the establishment of community skills, development centres, known as village polytechnics, for the benefit of poor rural households, particularly those headed by a female, people with the smallest landholdings and school dropouts. Programmes had also been put in place to promote integrated development through Rural Growth Centres. The Social Action Fund, public works programmes and fertilizer subsidy programmes had been introduced to empower the rural population and encourage decentralized decision-making.

63. The adoption of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, which Malawi had recently signed and would shortly ratify, gave the international community a chance to improve the plight of persons with disabilities. It also provided the opportunity to consolidate disability-related activities within the United Nations and improve the synergies of the Convention, the World Programme of Action concerning Disabled Persons and the Standard Rules on the Equalization of Opportunities for Persons with Disabilities. Reporting procedures by Member States should also be streamlined.

64. Malawi had in place a number of programmes aimed at the integration of persons with disabilities into mainstream society. The Malawi Growth and Development Strategy made special provision for the most vulnerable, and the issues of disability and ageing had been incorporated into national education policies. Persons with disabilities were helped to approach institutions providing soft loans for small enterprises.

65. In recognition of the skill and experience that older people brought to the workplace, to public life and to the family, a national policy for elderly persons had been drafted, with the goal of increasing older people's capacity for productivity, independence and active involvement in the development of their

communities and the country as a whole. A growing number of older persons had assumed the role of caring for children orphaned by HIV/AIDS. The Government recognized their importance in that regard.

66. **Ms. Shaidi** (United Republic of Tanzania) said that her country's National Strategy for Growth and Reduction of Poverty was focused on three main areas: reduction of income poverty, improved quality of life and good governance and accountability. In view of its pivotal role in national prosperity, employment was a key aspect of the National Strategy. The Government had also ratified the core ILO conventions and reviewed labour laws in order to guarantee fundamental labour rights and establish basic standards. Bodies had been established to set the minimum wage in each sector. Despite such measures, unemployment and poverty levels continued to rise. The Government had therefore adopted measures to promote microfinance, savings and credit societies and to provide vocational training for entrepreneurship and business skills. It was also reviewing the legal framework for formalizing the informal sector, which would give the sector access to productive resources.

67. A third of the population, representing 68 per cent of the productive force, was aged between 15 and 35. To enable them to contribute to the country's development, a national youth policy was in place, reflecting the World Programme of Action for Youth, the African Youth Charter and the Millennium Development Goals. The Government welcomed the Secretary-General's recommendations in his report on goals and targets for monitoring the progress of youth in the global economy (A/62/61/Add.1). Tanzania was already implementing some of the recommendations, but the collection of youth-specific disaggregated data would be difficult, owing to capacity constraints. Meanwhile, the Government had developed a comprehensive national youth employment action plan, which also incorporated an HIV/AIDS programme.

68. The cooperative movement provided excellent opportunities to eradicate poverty. Through various forms of job cooperative, women, young people, the elderly and people with disabilities had gained access to financial services enabling them to finance a small enterprise, build a house or educate their children. Capacity-building was required, however, to enable the cooperative movement to have a greater impact.

69. The Government had policies on young people, the elderly, families and peoples with disabilities. In that connection, it welcomed the adoption of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. It had already started the ratification process and was reviewing regulations on the employment of people with disabilities.

70. **Mr. Giorgio** (Eritrea) said that the Government continued its efforts to rehabilitate, reconstruct and develop the economic, commercial and infrastructure of the country by mobilizing its limited human, material and financial resources. The Government acted on the principle of equity and equality in its delivery of social services to all parts of the country. The policy on youth was mainstreamed into the national development strategy. Young people were mobilized into a national programme to participate in development projects, such as infrastructure construction, crop production or fishing. Expanded educational and training centres provided opportunities for young people to acquire the skills needed to join the workforce. In view of the transitional nature of the political situation and the fact that young people were entrusted with the duty of defending the country's sovereignty and territorial integrity, active participation in developmental activities had been required. That had enabled the development process not only to continue at a faster pace but also to be broad-based, while ensuring social cohesion. For that reason, his delegation believed that, although international cooperation had an important role to play, national Governments should have the freedom to decide on home-grown strategies that reflected specific conditions and priorities.

71. The Government had instituted a system to support the most disadvantaged members of society, such as the families of martyrs, families affected by HIV/AIDS, older persons, disabled persons and children. The Government's disability policy was principally focused on the Community-based Rehabilitation Programme, which catered for persons with disabilities. Starting out as a pilot project, the Programme was being extended to 32 regions, covering about 60 per cent of the country. A State-run orthopaedic workshop had provided over 20,000 people with prostheses and other appliances. The policy also aimed to provide access to health and rehabilitation services, education, vocational training and other assistance to facilitate mobility and

communication. Great strides had been made in achieving some of the Millennium Development Goals; yet many structural problems remained unchanged. Unless action to combat poverty was intensified and coordinated at every level, many countries, including Eritrea, would not succeed in halving poverty by the target year of 2015. The global development agenda must be implemented in full.

72. **Mr. Ndjonkou** (International Labour Organization) said that, when, in 2006, the Economic and Social Council had adopted a Ministerial Declaration recognizing full and productive employment and decent work for all as a global goal, Member States had requested the whole multilateral system to mainstream the goal in their policies, programmes and activities. To that end, the High Level Committee on Programmes of the United Nations System Chief Executives Board for Coordination had asked ILO to take the lead in developing the Toolkit for Mainstreaming Employment and Decent Work. The Toolkit was important not only in fostering greater policy coherence but also in achieving the Millennium Development Goals, because "decent work" meant work in which rights were protected, adequate income generated and social protection granted. The role of cooperatives was crucial in that connection, not only in providing employment but in facilitating the economic and social progress of its members. ILO recommendation No. 193 (2002) set out the principles by which ILO was guided in that regard.

73. ILO believed that the goal of productive and decent work for youth was best attained through its Youth Employment Programme, which was based on three pillars: (i) information on the magnitude and characteristics of the youth employment challenge, together with policies to deal with it; (ii) promotional activities and advocacy to raise awareness and mobilize support; and (iii) technical assistance to help Governments and employers' and workers' organizations develop coherent and coordinated policies. One specific area of ILO support focused on the development and implementation in many countries of national action plans on youth employment.

74. An ILO report, entitled "Equality at work: Tackling the challenges", examined emerging issues in patterns of workplace discrimination and inequalities. One such issue was that of age. In many countries, longer life expectancy had not been accompanied by longer working lives. The debate on the impact of ageing on social security financing, therefore, obscured the fact that a large number of women and men were unemployed, inactive or working in the informal economy, instead of being employed formally and contributing to pension systems. ILO was developing innovative strategies to meet such challenges and help extend working lives in productive and decent employment. The ninety-eighth session of the International Labour Conference would include a general discussion on an effective plan of action to achieve that end.

75. With regard to the question of families, ILO research and experience underscored the importance of addressing the work-family conflict in both developing and developed countries. Such a conflict was particularly acute in poor families, which found it difficult to work their way out of poverty and end the intergenerational transmission of poverty. Women, too, saw their economic security and hopes of equality continue to be threatened by their reproductive role, since they faced discrimination and dismissal on the basis of actual or even potential pregnancy. Where they did not have decent work or maternity protection, their health and that of their children was liable to suffer. ILO was working to address such realities and the lack of awareness in most developing countries. Country studies had been produced on the difficulties workers faced in providing for their economic needs and carrying out their responsibilities. A recent ILO paper on safe maternity highlighted priority areas for action in the world of work and would contribute to progress on Millennium Development Goal No. 5.

The meeting rose at 5.50 p.m.

United Nations A/C.3/62/SR.5

General Assembly
Sixty-second session

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Third Committee

Summary record of the 5th meeting
Held at Headquarters, New York, on Wednesday, 10 October 2007, at 10 a.m.

Chairman: Mr. Wolfe .... (Jamaica)

Contents

Agenda item 62: Social development (*continued*)

(a) Implementation of the outcome of the World Summit for Social Development and the twenty-fourth special session of the General Assembly (*continued*)

(b) Social Development, including questions relating to the world social situation, and to youth, ageing, disabled persons and the family (*continued*)

(c) Follow-up to the International Year of Older Persons: Second World Assembly on Ageing (*continued*)

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The meeting was called to order at 10.05 a.m.

Agenda item 62: Social development (*continued*)

(a) Implementation of the outcome of the World Summit for Social Development and of the twenty-fourth special session of the General Assembly (*continued*) (A/62/71-E/2007/46, A/62/122 and A/62/168)

(b) Social development, including questions relating to the world social situation and to youth, ageing, disabled persons and the family (*continued*) (A/62/61-E/2007/7, A/62/61/Add.1-E/2007/7/Add.1, A/62/132 and Add.1, A/62/154, A/62/157, A/62/357 and A/C.3/62/L.4)

(c) Follow-up to the International Year of Older Persons: Second World Assembly on Ageing (*continued*) (A/62/131 and Corr.1)

1. **Ms. Atanassova** (Bulgaria), speaking as the Bulgarian youth delegate to the sixty-second session of the General Assembly, said that the accession of Bulgaria to the European Union had opened up many possibilities for mobility, education and job opportunities to her country's youth. One of the most pressing issues facing the international community was how to guarantee the effective participation of youth in the global economy. Unfortunately, a decade after the adoption of the World Programme of Action on Youth, its goals had not been met.

2. Unemployment had become one of the biggest challenges for global youth, and she called on Member States to put an end to the escalating juvenilization and feminization of poverty as a matter of utmost priority. Both the public and private sectors should provide opportunities for self-employment, vocational training, poverty reduction and job creation. An alternative way to fight joblessness was to promote social entrepreneurship through training and microcredit. The costs of microfinance were small compared to their impact on empowerment and escape from poverty and marginalization.

3. Although progress had been made in the area of literacy, primary education was still not universal. In the current knowledge-based economy, even secondary education was no longer a guarantee of entry into the labour market. Therefore, young people must have opportunities for higher education and to acquire skills through non-formal and on-the-job training. The gap between available skills and labour market demands could be bridged by involving employers in adjusting the educational curriculum to the needs of the market.

4. Besides being a driving force in poverty reduction and modernization of education, youth should also be recognized as a reliable and committed partner in achieving international development strategies such as the Millennium Development Goals. As the international community moved into the implementation stages of its development agenda, youth must be mobilized to become not only beneficiaries but contributors.

5. Therefore, she strongly supported youth consultation mechanisms and called on all Governments to include youth representatives in their delegations to the United Nations. She commended the establishment of the United Nations Youth Fund in 1981 and urged Member States to allocate funding for its activities on a regular and predictable basis. Businesses that were members of the Global Compact should support the empowerment of youth delegates and facilitate other forms of youth participation as well.

6. **Ms. Romulus** (Haiti) said that her delegation endorsed the view that a society could be judged by the way it treated its elderly and disabled members and that promoting the family as the basic unit of society was a way to ensure the future of humanity.

7. It was a paradox that, in countries which had not reached a highly advanced stage of development, the care of the elderly did not seem to pose a problem, yet a development process that resulted in greater economic disparity often led the elderly to be viewed as a burden to society, even by their families. In Haiti, the economic liberalization begun in the 1980s had seriously damaged the country's socio-economic structures, which had worsened the already precarious situation of its elderly citizens. Since the adoption of the Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing, various institutional mechanisms for policy development had been established. Haiti would welcome technical and material assistance from the international community in the elaboration of laws and strategies specifically directed at the needs of the elderly. Like other developing countries, its population was young, but it was not rare to see the aged left unprotected because their children and even their grandchildren had died before them.

8. The Haitian Government was paying increasing attention to the issue of disabled persons, and their integration into society was one of its priorities. Accordingly, it had recently established a Government department for the integration of the disabled, and disability issues had been made a priority in the 2007-2008 budget. The most recent statistics showed that about 800,000 Haitians were affected by a disability. The problem lay not in the handicap itself, but in the discrimination it caused.

9. Haiti, like many other developing countries, had seen an increase in the number of single-parent families and a disturbing rise in the number of abandoned children. Global cooperation was needed to overcome the problems created by the weakening of the family structure.

10. **Mr. Bhattarai** (Nepal) said that despite the commitments made in the Copenhagen Declaration on Social Development, important goals on poverty eradication, full employment and social integration were far from being met. His delegation emphasized a rights-based approach to development as the best way to address social development issues. Nepal's interim constitution of 2007 had incorporated that approach, and even with its limited resources and capacity, Nepal would continue its efforts in that direction. Full employment and decent working conditions would be achievable in the developing countries when the developed countries were more accommodating towards migrant workers. Globalization had further marginalized the least developed and landlocked developing countries, and its negative impact should be addressed in the context of social development as well. Land-locked developing countries must receive special consideration in coping with their particular vulnerability.

11. Poverty, limited infrastructure, a growing population and inadequate resources and capacity were some of the challenges to Nepal's social development. Its interim plan 2007-2010 was intended to address pervasive inequality, inequity, discrimination and social injustice. It had formed the High-level Senior Citizens Coordination Committee to address the issue of ageing, and was also focusing attention on the empowerment of youth for their effective participation in national restructuring and socio-economic transformation.

12. The adoption of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities was a significant step towards ensuring their rights worldwide. Nepal's interim constitution provided for special treatment and protection for the disabled, and national policies and an action plan were being implemented. The Civil Service Act had recently been amended to allow positive discrimination for disabled persons in Government employment.

13. In the past year, Nepal had witnessed unprecedented political transformation, generating new hopes and aspirations among its people. As a country emerging from conflict, it was confident that it could improve living conditions through the implementation of massive social development programmes. It hoped to continue to receive support from the international community in its endeavours.

14. **Ms. Poymanova** (Russian Federation) said that her delegation welcomed the activities of the Commission for Social Development and the outcome of its forty-fifth session, as an effective mechanism for coordination of international cooperation in the areas of youth, ageing and the family and the rights of disabled persons. It provided a unique forum for constructive dialogue among all groups of States on key social development issues. Her delegation also welcomed the outcome of the fourth session of the working group to draft an optional protocol to the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, and hoped that its work could go forward without politicization, taking into account the views of the widest possible group of States parties.

15. Effective social policy was one of the foundations of economic recovery in the Russian Federation, and had led to falling unemployment rates and an improvement in the standard of living. Further innovative economic measures on the agenda were designed to promote investment and growth. As youth currently represented over 27 per cent of the population, the country's social and economic development required an effective policy and strategy to integrate youth as full members of the economy and society, which were being implemented through the recently established State Youth Committee. The Madrid Plan of Action adopted at the Second World Assembly on Ageing was also seen as a framework for the Russian Federation's actions in favour of the elderly.

16. One of the most important events to take place in 2007 was the adoption of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, which was under consideration for signature by her Government. A plan of action for 2006-2010 in support of persons with disabilities had been launched.

17. In closing, she noted that the Russian Federation supported the consolidation of United Nations activities in the areas of social development, security and human rights, which would be the basis for United Nations reform in the social and economic spheres.

18. **Ms. Medal** (Nicaragua) said that social development was a subject of great interest to countries like Nicaragua, given its vulnerability and the challenges it faced in combating poverty and unemployment. Globalization and the capitalist system had not been the best allies of countries like hers. After 16 years of applying the economic policies imposed by the international financial institutions, the country was in chaos, with a large percentage of the population living on less than a dollar a day. Although it had been recognized at the World Summit for Social Development that productive employment was a basic element of development and an effective means of combating poverty, little progress had been made. The economic, social and cultural rights of Nicaraguans, like those of many in developing countries, had been sacrificed for the benefit of a few, as a result of globalization and free markets.

19. Nevertheless, Nicaragua had begun a new stage in its history. The Government of Reconciliation and National Unity was seeking social development, poverty reduction, job creation for all and the elimination of inequalities. The universal right to free education had been established, and major progress had been achieved in eradicating illiteracy. Access to free health care and medicines had also been guaranteed. Microcredit programmes offered support to small and medium-sized businesses, and also to graduates who had been unable to find jobs, to encourage entrepreneurship. Gender equity was another important element, and the new Government had set a target of 50 per cent women in key posts in Government and public institutions. The "Zero Hunger" programme provided food aid combined with technical assistance aimed at making families self-sufficient in meeting their food needs.

20. Those efforts required mobilization of national and international resources through South-South cooperation and regional integration. However, the industrialized countries should also face their responsibilities in that area, not only as donors of assistance but as development partners. Nicaragua had recently signed a three-year agreement with the International Monetary Fund, and had established development indicators that went beyond the targets set in the Millennium Development Goals.

21. All countries, rich or poor, aspired to social development, in order to ensure international peace and security, eliminate migratory flows and overcome inequality. Developing countries sought fair trade, where companies made investments not just because they would find cheap labour and raw materials, but assumed their share of social responsibility by investing in education, training, health and decent housing for their workers.

22. Her Government was concerned at the high rate of migration by its citizens in search of better job opportunities, and believed that the best way to stem migration to developed countries was to create good jobs within its own borders. That could happen only when the developed countries met their commitment of 0.7 per cent of GDP for official development assistance, established in the Monterrey Consensus. While poverty remained in Africa and while hunger, unemployment, and infant mortality persisted in Latin America and the Caribbean, migration to the North would continue. Her delegation called on receiving countries to treat the men and women who left their homes in search of a better life for themselves and their families with dignity and full respect for their human rights.

23. The peoples of the world must become aware that poverty was the greatest enemy of humanity. Without education, health and adequate food, there could be no development, and without development, there could be no peace.

24. **Mr. Wali** (Nigeria) reiterated Nigeria's commitment to the implementation of the relevant initiatives and frameworks on social development. His country had established a new Ministry for Women's Affairs and Social Development, which was responsible for social development initiatives relating to the family, youth, disabled persons, older persons and other vulnerable groups in Nigeria. Other

achievements made by the Government towards implementing the outcome of the World Summit included strengthening of its national poverty eradication programmes. The National Economic Empowerment and Development Strategy I (NEEDS I) was aimed at reducing poverty through economic growth and employment generation. NEEDS II was designed to address challenges and issues not covered by NEEDS I, particularly social development, gender issues, science and technology and the family. Further, the National Poverty Eradication Programme (NAPEP) had been established to partner with stakeholders to provide loans for poor urban and rural communities.

25. Nigeria was committed to good governance, including a zero tolerance anti-corruption policy, the rule of law and the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals, to which it had contributed large sums of money. Nigeria also believed in a decent work agenda. It had taken measures to create a favourable work environment for labourers and had recently approved a National Workplace Policy on HIV/AIDS.

26. Other social development activities to be implemented by the Federal Ministry for Women's Affairs and Social Development included a programme for the integration of destitute persons in Nigeria, a multisectoral approach to poverty alleviation, rights to affordable education, family health, environmental sustainability, rights of protection of the family and ensuring peace and security. He reaffirmed Nigeria's commitment to General Assembly resolution 61/142, which called for mainstreaming ageing issues into poverty eradication strategies and national development plans, and to implementing the Political Declaration and the Madrid Plan of Action on Ageing.

27. With regard to the need for wealth creation, Nigeria had mapped out a comprehensive master plan for a holistic development of the region. He reiterated his Government's call for genuine foreign investment in the energy, power, and other infrastructural sectors of the Nigerian economy. The partnership of civil society, non-governmental organizations and the private sector was needed to generate employment and address adequately the challenge of social development.

28. Nigeria recognized that the implementation of the Copenhagen Commitments and the attainment of the MDGs were mutually reinforcing and that the international community needed to assist national Governments in capacity building in order to implement those instruments. He urged developed countries that had not done so to make concrete efforts towards meeting the target of 0.7 per cent of their gross national product for official development assistance to developing countries, in accordance with their commitments.

29. **Mr. Hermoso** (Philippines) said that his Government had taken a bold step in engaging youth in the policymaking process by appointing young people to head the Office of the President's National Youth Commission. The participation of the Philippines Commissioner for Youth in the sixty-second session of the General Assembly was proof of his country's commitment to the United Nations World Programme of Action for Youth (WPAY).

30. The National Youth Commission also championed the cause of Filipino youth through the Sangguniang Kabataan (SK) or youth council, where youth under the age of 24 sat as policymakers. His Government was working on reforming the SK model, and the upcoming local elections for the SKs offered an opportunity to guide the young Government leaders towards more responsive, MDG-inspired programmes and Government platforms. According to the Philippine Local Government Code, the youth councils were mandated to receive 10 per cent of the internal revenue allotment of its locality, in order to help them devise sustainable programmes and initiatives to assist the Government in achieving the MDGs.

31. The Philippine Government expressed its commitment to improving the lives of persons with disabilities, protecting their human rights and empowering them to become active participants in society. The Philippines had signed the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, and it welcomed Member States' participation in that important instrument.

32. It was unfortunate but widely recognized that most persons with disabilities were among the poorest of the poor. One way of empowering them was to ensure that they benefited from States' economic progress. Cooperation among all nations in the development field would help improve States' ability to address the issues faced by persons with disabilities. His delegation stressed the need for the MDGs to be more disability inclusive.

33. **Ms. Al-Mansouri** (United Arab Emirates) said that more than half the world population still lacked the basic requirements for living with dignity, and that poverty, disease, unemployment, illiteracy, organized crime and armed conflict still presented major challenges to creating a humane society in which peoples enjoyed security, stability and prosperity. She commended United Nations efforts in the field of social development and urged the redoubling of international efforts to implement the outcomes of all the conferences on social development.

34. The United Arab Emirates continued to fulfil its commitments relating to social development and improved standard of living for human beings at the national and global levels by providing necessary financial and human resources and contributing to the global partnership to create a humane society. A recent instance of her Government's commitment at the global level was the launch of the Dubai Cares campaign, which in its initial phase aimed to provide primary education for over 1 million children throughout the world, particularly in Asia and Africa, education being the main factor in poverty eradication. At the local level, her country had launched the United Arab Emirates Government Strategy, its first mandatory programme for Government performance. The programme focused on ensuring country-wide sustainable development and high quality of life for the population, in accordance with United Nations efforts to promote human development. To achieve the above-mentioned goals, her Government provided free education at all levels of schooling, including higher education, universities, colleges and technical institutes, in order to prepare young men and women for work to meet the demands of national development plans.

35. The United Arab Emirates had worked to raise health services to an international standard, and had succeeded in lowering infant and postpartum mortality, eliminating polio and malaria, and limiting the spread of HIV/AIDS, with no new cases reported since the discovery of the disease. The Government had also achieved progress in most social development indexes, such as growth in per capita income and increase in Government expenditure on education, health, social services and social security programmes. Enrolment rates in elementary schools had risen and illiteracy rates had declined. Women's participation in the workforce and the decision-making process was on the rise, and in the previous two years, two women had been appointed as Government ministers.

36. Her Government had recently issued laws to protect the human rights of nationals and residents in the country, relating in particular to children, human trafficking and working hours and conditions for labourers and domestic helpers. The Government had also put in place mechanisms to follow up the implementation of those laws. It had established special centres to assist, treat, and train juveniles, troubled youth and persons with special needs.

37. **Mr. Anzola Quinto** (Venezuela) said that one of the central premises of the Bolivarian revolution was the establishment of a new development model focused on the human individual. His Government had made poverty eradication the linchpin of its social development policy and of its national development strategy. For that reason, Venezuela was firmly committed to achieving the Millennium Development Goals. Aware of the importance of promoting full employment and decent work for all as they related to poverty eradication, his Government approached the issue from the standpoint of endogenous development, based on solidarity and human dignity, in the context of twenty-first-century socialism.

38. Eradication of poverty in Venezuela was being achieved through programmes known as social missions, aimed at progressively integrating marginalized social classes into society, through an equitable distribution of income and wealth.

39. His Government echoed the call voiced by the Secretary-General in his report (A/62/122) on the importance of creation of youth employment in poverty eradication. More than 64 per cent of young Venezuelans were part of the workforce.

40. The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) had recognized Venezuela as an illiteracy-free territory in October 2005. The Government guaranteed the Venezuelan people access to health care through the social missions in the health sector. Social investment was on the rise, and unemployment rates had fallen. Given the fundamental role of microcredit in poverty eradication, the Government enacted legislation, such as the Microcredit Law, to guarantee access to credit for the individuals in greatest need, and provided incentives to small and medium-sized enterprises.

41. The social missions were also the means by which the Government incorporated older persons into its social policy, using the concept of active ageing, which was based on the elements of health, participation and security. That approach sought to improve the social conditions and quality of life of older persons, a traditionally excluded group, and to involve them in the design of policies implemented on their behalf. Initiatives such as the "comprehensive villages" provided comprehensive care to persons over 60 living in a situation of economic insolvency.

42. The Law on Persons with Disabilities had recently entered into force. Its aim was to guarantee the full development and autonomy of persons with disabilities and to integrate them into family and community life.

43. His delegation wished to note that its national information for the Secretary-General's report, "Follow-up to the tenth anniversary of the International Year of the Family and beyond" (A/62/132) had been submitted to the Secretariat in a timely manner and that for reasons beyond its control had been included in document A/62/132/Add.1.

44. The Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela believed the family to be the natural unit of society and ensured its full and comprehensive protection. The Government pursued social policies for the protection of the family through the social missions, of which mention should be made of the food mission, which benefited more than 11 million people.

45. The Government declared its commitment to work with the other nations of the region in building just and equitable societies based on democracy and solidarity. To that end his country promoted regional cooperation initiatives, such as the Bolivarian Alternative for the Americas, that were based on the principles of solidarity and complementarity.

46. **Mr. Belinga-Eboutou** (Cameroon) said that poverty eradication was a priority for Cameroon. At the national level, the Heavily Indebted Poor Countries (HIPC) Initiative had impacted positively on education, agriculture, infrastructure and action to combat HIV/AIDS. Youth employment-generating initiatives had been organized throughout the country and a national policy on ageing was being elaborated in implementation of the Madrid Plan of Action. Legislation had also been enacted to guarantee special rights for disabled persons as well as their equal access to health care, education, training and employment, and a national committee had been established to facilitate their socio-economic rehabilitation. Early results were encouraging, thanks to the support of Cameroon's partners in development.

47. Poverty continued to be a serious threat to world peace. The human person should be at the focus of the Organization's activities, and the international community should honour its commitments towards least developed countries in the area of official development assistance, investment and debt relief. His delegation welcomed the prioritization of social development issues over the past decade by the United Nations and Bretton Woods institutions. The Millennium Village Initiative, inter alia, showed that dramatic results could be achieved in a short period of time.

48. **Ms. Kayun** (Ukraine) said that the advancement of a socially oriented economy in the Ukraine and the enhancement of social policy based on the efficient use of existing resources had been strengthened through recent legislative initiatives. Productive work and full and adequately remunerated employment, especially youth employment, was a key to combating poverty and promoting social integration, and her Government was committed to furthering the outcomes of the forty-fifth session of the Commission for Social Development at the national and international levels. While the primary responsibility for social development policies lay with Governments, partnerships with international organizations and civil society had an important supportive role to play. Her delegation was eager to contribute towards the creation of a more competitive and dynamic economy that furthered sustainable development as well as social cohesion.

49. **Mr. Jeenbaev** (Kyrgyzstan) said that the Copenhagen Declaration and Programme of Action and the Millennium Development Goals provided a basis for promoting social development at the national and international levels as well as an international consensus for poverty eradication and the creation of stable and peaceful societies. Regional development strategies were informed by those Goals, including in Central Asia. The National Development Strategy for 2007-2010 demonstrated the commitment of the Kyrgyz Republic to those goals; it focused on improving living standards and social well-being, including in cooperation with regional and

international mechanisms. A welfare state was being created based on a dialogue between national and local government and civil society. The same principles were being applied to foreign policy on social issues with a view to increasing the number of stakeholders for new forms of social partnership to promote social equality between States. The political will existed between States; what was needed was to strengthen mechanisms for monitoring joint action on the Goals.

50. **Mr. Omar** (Food and Agricultural Organization of the United Nations (FAO)) said that the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities was of direct relevance to the work of FAO, especially in ensuring right of access to food and nutrition, education, health care and decent employment. A number of the provisions of the instrument were directly linked to FAO's mandate. Rural pilot projects undertaken by FAO in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Cambodia, Ethiopia, Sierra Leone, Sri Lanka and Thailand with the support of national Governments and national and international NGOs had demonstrated that persons with disabilities were capable of successfully applying new techniques for income generation and improved livelihoods.

51. Emergency situations only increased the vulnerability of such persons to discrimination, poverty and food insecurity and created new disabilities due to the destruction of livelihoods, malnutrition, food-related diseases, trauma and unsafe conditions. FAO had thus updated its emergency and rehabilitation operations to better serve the needs of persons with disabilities and their families and to ensure their full integration in post-emergency rehabilitation programmes.

52. **Ms. Abdelhady-Nasser** (Observer for Palestine), speaking in exercise of the right of reply, said that Israel should consider its responsibilities as an occupying Power towards the occupied civilian population whose social well-being, development, economic conditions, family life and circumstances had been directly and severely impacted over the past 40 years by unlawful policies and measures that affected children, women, elderly and disabled persons alike. Ninety per cent of Palestinians in Gaza lived below the poverty line, with an overwhelming majority dependent on food aid. Livelihoods and employment opportunities were being destroyed on a daily basis, with thousands of families left without a source of income. Contrary to the principles it claimed to espouse, Israel was deepening abject poverty among Palestinians and increasing their dependency on the welfare system, including through its construction of the wall, its imposition of a racist and debilitating permit regime, expansion of settlements, imposition of closures and severe restrictions on the movement of persons and goods throughout the occupied territories. All such measures were in grave contravention of Israel's international obligations. Far from promoting social development, Israel's unlawful policies and practices against the Palestinian people had devastated their socio-economic conditions and were destroying the very fabric of Palestinian society. Promoting national development and progress while destroying another people's development and future could hardly be construed as a contribution to international cooperation for sustainable development.

The meeting rose at 11.55 a.m.

United Nations A/C.3/62/SR.6

General Assembly
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Third Committee

Summary record of the 6th meeting
Held at Headquarters, New York, on Wednesday, 10 October 2007, at 3 p.m.

Chairman: Mr. Wolfe .... (Jamaica)
later: Mr. Gibbons .... (Ireland)

Contents

Agenda item 106: Crime prevention and criminal justice*

Agenda item 107: International drug control*

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* Items which the Committee has decided to consider together.

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The meeting was called to order at 3.10 p.m.

Agenda item 106: Crime prevention and criminal justice (A/62/84, 126 and 127; A/C.3/62/L.2 and 3)

Agenda item 107: International drug control (A/62/117)

1. **Mr. Costa** (Executive Director, the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC)) said that, although drug control, crime deterrence and the prevention of terrorism could be tackled separately, it would be an error to do so: drugs, crime and terrorism interacted at a profound level with peace, security, development and the rule of law. They should therefore be dealt with in the context of a country's overall aspirations. The architecture for a safer world should be based on a strong social foundation and the rule of law, ensuring development, security and peace. That was not an idealistic prototype but could be applied to the real world. The Office's work was testimony to the fact that drug control, crime deterrence and the prevention of terrorism were essential to the construction of safe and healthy societies. By the same token, healthy, competitive and open societies could cope more easily with evil behaviour.

2. With regard to illicit drugs, the experience of UNODC was that development was crucial to reducing the world's supply of drugs. Rural communities in Afghanistan, South East-Asia and the Andean territories needed long-term assistance to reduce their dependence on opium, coca and cannabis. For that reason, UNODC worked with funding partners, including development banks, to ensure that farmers could find sustainable alternatives to drug crops. Otherwise, illicit cultivation would persist or else the destruction of crops would be the cause of a humanitarian tragedy.

3. There was no better way to eradicate drug crops than action by farmers themselves to return to legality and a decent livelihood. It was, however, no coincidence that the regions of the world where most drugs were cultivated were outside government control, for example the southern Afghanistan, the Shan State of eastern Myanmar and the insurgency-controlled regions of western Colombia. Areas where the rule of law was weak were also magnets for drug traffickers. Trafficking routes most often traversed war zones, failing regions and States where corruption was rife. A vicious circle was perpetuated thereby, since illicit activity made such areas even more unstable by perverting the local economy, deepening corruption and eroding the integrity of public institutions.

4. The countries of Central America, the Caribbean and West Africa, in particular, were caught in the crossfire of drugs and crime. The tragedy of Guinea-Bissau and neighbouring countries was well documented: the whole region was under attack by cocaine traffickers. It needed assistance to strengthen criminal justice, develop crime prevention strategies and promote long-term social and economic development. He called for assistance from rich countries, especially in Europe, the destination of most of the cocaine. There were lessons to be learned from more prosperous regions, as well, such as the Balkans, which were similar crossroads of crime, trafficking, corruption and instability.

5. One important factor was the need for effective justice. A major part of the work of UNODC was therefore to help States strengthen the rule of law, including prison reform, witness protection programmes and measures to counter money-laundering and kidnapping. In Afghanistan and Central Asia, the Office helped establish drug control agencies, build border posts, strengthen the judiciary and improve interdiction. It had set up counter-narcotic intelligence centres in the Persian Gulf and Central Asia. It had launched a trilateral initiative between Afghanistan, the Islamic Republic of Iran and Pakistan to facilitate border control and legal cooperation; and it was hoped that similar arrangements could be made between Afghanistan, the Islamic Republic of Iran and Turkmenistan. UNODC also assisted States in Africa to strengthen their judicial capacity and reduce the continent's vulnerability. He commended the African Union's plan of action on drugs and crime, which was to be adopted at its Ministerial Conference later in the year. It was also gratifying that Mexico and the Central American States were shortly to adopt a similar strategy at their regional summit in Guatemala in December 2007.

6. Security, development and the rule of law, while essential for drug control, in themselves, were not sufficient. Society as a whole must be involved, especially in the reduction of drug addiction and, as a consequence, HIV/AIDS. Despite sensationalist stories in the media about how the world was flooded with illicit drugs, leading to calls for their legalization, the evidence from the *World Drug Report 2007* showed

that drug control was working, worldwide. The situation with regard to almost every kind of illicit drug — cocaine, heroin, cannabis or amphetamine-type stimulants — showed signs of overall stability, whether in relation to cultivation, trafficking, production or consumption. Although the problem did not appear to be getting worse, however, there remained 25 million problem drug users in the world.

7. It was therefore important to ensure that the number of such users should not increase and that the 200 million occasional drug users should not become hard-core addicts. Secondly, problem drug users must be helped to reduce the damage that they did to themselves and others. It would be a painful process; but, in ratifying the Single Convention on Narcotic Drugs, States had recognized that addiction to narcotic drugs constituted a serious evil for the individual and was fraught with social and economic danger to mankind.

8. UNODC worked with Member States to improve drug prevention, treatment and rehabilitation, so that drug addicts could receive help rather than be punished or stigmatized. It was strengthening its partnership with the United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-HABITAT) and the World Health Organization (WHO) to promote safer and healthier communities. The Office also worked to reduce the risk for injecting drug users of contracting and spreading blood-borne diseases such as HIV/AIDS, especially in the countries of the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS), eastern Europe and India.

9. Drug control should not be the domain of law enforcers or health-care workers alone; it should involve the whole of society. Community-centred prevention meant working with children to ensure that they got the love, encouragement and support that they needed to develop self-esteem. Family-based programmes should be given greater support, since prevention began at home. Young people should have the opportunity to engage in healthy and constructive activities; and in that context, he expressed his appreciation to Qatar for promoting such an approach through the Global Sport Fund. The media, too, had an important role to play, providing information and promoting drug control campaigns. A campaign similar to the one on drinking and driving should be waged against driving under the influence of drugs. In short, UNODC promoted a holistic approach to drug control.

10. The Office also dealt with the issue of trafficking in persons. Long hidden in the shadows, the phenomenon persisted in almost every country, manifesting itself in various tragic ways: underage girls sold by families to foreign tourists; teenagers duped into prostitution; child soldiers; sex slaves; people working in mines or sweatshops; or domestic servants receiving no pay. It stripped people of their rights, robbed them of their dignity and could even kill. Yet there was much ignorance about it, owing to denial and lack of awareness, although evidence of its existence was everywhere.

11. The vulnerability of the victims usually arose from poverty, cultural deprivation and ignorance, whatever country they were in. UNODC tried to sensitize consumers against creating a demand for the goods and services provided by victims of trafficking. A broad social basis to fight human trafficking was the secret to success. To that end, UNODC, with other members of the United Nations family, had recently launched the Global Initiative to Fight Human Trafficking (UN.GIFT). The aim was to mobilize a wide spectrum of society, to broaden knowledge of such trafficking and to step up technical assistance. Evidence-gathering and discussion sessions had been held in South Africa and India, and others would shortly follow in Brazil, Côte d'Ivoire and Thailand. He urged the Committee to support the Initiative.

12. Another threat to the architecture of a safer world was corruption. It subverted development by reducing investment and stealing public money. It undermined democracy and the rule of law. It even posed a security threat by enabling criminals to infiltrate State structures and weaken the security apparatus through bribery. UNODC therefore assisted Member States to implement the United Nations Convention against Corruption, which, he noted, had entered into force within two years of its adoption: a record for United Nations conventions. The Office also encouraged the introduction of preventive measures like transparent tender processes, official disclosure of earnings by public officials and clear rules for the funding of political parties. In countries as diverse as Brazil, Indonesia, Algeria and Tajikistan, it was also assisting with independent anti-corruption agencies, developing financial intelligence units and strengthening judicial integrity.

13. A major breakthrough was occurring in the field of asset recovery. Thanks to the joint World Bank/UNODC

Stolen Asset Recovery (StAR) Initiative launched in September 2007, countries would have a better chance of preventing public funds from being stolen. Public attitudes were changing. There was less tolerance of corruption. Not many years previously, corruption had been considered normal in politics; yet many corrupt governments were being voted out of office and corrupt companies named and shamed. Non-governmental organizations (NGOs) were demanding greater transparency, and journalists were exposing corruption. UNODC was working with other United Nations institutions to strengthen integrity within the United Nations itself.

14. An essential part of the work of UNODC related to terrorism. In addition to its security aspects, terrorism had a negative impact on development, driving away investment, tourism and business and diverting resources from other public expenditure. UNODC helped States to strengthen their legal regime against terrorism. The rule of law must be the basis of any such regime. Terrorists were, after all, criminals and should, therefore, be brought to justice on the basis of evidence, with cooperation — often all too lacking — among law enforcement agencies, shared information and mutual legal assistance. The legal assistance provided by UNODC was unmatched, since it had experience of the cross-cutting links between drugs, crime and terrorism.

15. In its work, the Office followed the guidance given by Member States when they became parties to international legal instruments on crime, drugs and terrorism. More recently, Member States had supported the adoption of its medium-term strategy. He urged them to continue that support with the adoption of the UNODC budget. He looked forward to further political guidance at forthcoming meetings of the Conference of States Parties for the United Nations Conventions against Transnational Organized Crime and against Corruption, the Commission on Narcotic Drugs and the Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice and at the Twelfth Crime Congress. UNODC was also ready to help States tackle emerging threats like cyber crime, environmental crime and nuclear terrorism.

16. Calls for technical assistance from UNODC were becoming increasingly frequent and owing to the doubling of increased voluntary funding for its activities over the past five years, it was in a better position to carry out its mandate. He noted, however, that the resources available to UNODC were smaller than the annual expenditure by the city of New York on garbage disposal. The paucity of resources was partly offset by the fact that the Office no longer bore its responsibility alone: there was closer cooperation with other members of the United Nations family, and partnerships with international financial institutions, the private sector and civil society were being strengthened.

17. **Mr. Cabral** (Guinea-Bissau) said that drugs, trafficking in persons, corruption and terrorism were a cancer on human society, attacking particularly those States that lacked the structural means to resist. He was glad that the Executive Director of UNODC had mentioned Guinea-Bissau, which had seen the foundations of its society under attack by drugs and the drug money used to finance political activities and destroy the body politic, with disastrous consequences for development. Real international cooperation was needed. He hoped that the States that received drugs would be willing help his country not only with money but also with technology and expressed gratitude for the assistance provided to it by UNODC.

18. **Mr. Saeed** (Sudan) commended the emphasis that the Executive Director of UNODC had laid on the prime importance of development. He regretted, however, that the Executive Director had made no reference to the important work done by the African Institute for the Prevention of Crime and the Treatment of Offenders (UNAFRI) and the cooperation between it and UNODC. Fostering development was a good starting point for addressing the problem of drugs. The important role played by the African Institute deserved attention. His delegation urged donor countries to help to strengthen the Institute.

19. **Mr. Degia** (Barbados) said that his delegation pledged its full support for and cooperation with UNODC. The publication of the May 2007 UNODC report, entitled *Crime and Development in Central America: Caught in the Crossfire*, served only to highlight the serious contradiction inherent in the decision to close its regional office in Barbados, which had served 29 States and Territories. Barbados and the States members of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) were neither suppliers nor major consumers of illicit drugs. They were neither arms producers nor exporters.

20. Nevertheless, because of their geographical position and external factors largely beyond their

control, those States were affected by the scourge of transnational organized crime, the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons and drug trafficking. Small countries with limited resources had a vital need for international cooperation and assistance. The presence of the UNODC office in Barbados had been extremely important to the Caribbean region. He, therefore, failed to understand why the region was being marginalized and its problems ignored given the grave situation on the ground.

21. **Mr. Costa** (Executive Director, United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC)), replying to the representative of Guinea-Bissau, said that, indeed, Africa, especially sub-Saharan Africa, had previously never had a serious drug cultivation or addiction problem. Nevertheless, in the light of the severe interdiction measures taken to prevent cocaine from Andean countries from entering the United States of America and Europe and of Africa's vulnerability owing to limited capacity and resources, traffickers had turned to Africa to establish bases and had fostered corruption among army, police and government officials, and instability in the West African region. Organized crime required instability in order to succeed. Lastly, the influx of drugs posed a threat to public health which had not previously existed. The Office was reviewing the situation and making every effort to build capacity and promote judicial and penal reform.

22. He concurred with the representative of Sudan on the need for development to combat crime and corruption. Good and strong governance was also a key factor. He regretted that he had failed to mention the African Institute. Such institutions helped UNODC to understand the situation on the ground so that it could provide advice and more focused technical assistance to Member States with available resources.

23. With respect to the statement by the representative of Barbados, Central America and the Caribbean had been caught in the crossfire between drug producers south of their borders and consumers in the north. UNODC had been compelled to close its office in Barbados because there had been no State willing to provide the necessary resources to maintain it. The report mentioned by Barbados had been published to draw the international community's attention to the vulnerability of the region and mobilize it to provide the necessary assistance.

24. **Mr. Makanga** (Gabon) said that he would like further clarification of the relationship between drug control, crime prevention and counter-terrorism and development, peace and security. He wondered whether other factors were equally important for enhancing such security.

25. **Mr. Babadoudou** (Benin), drawing attention to a current campaign by States to abolish the death penalty, said that he would like to hear the views of the Executive Director on the potential impact of such a campaign on his efforts to combat transnational organized crime.

26. **Mr. Costa** (Executive Director, United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC)), replying to the representative of Gabon, said that UNODC had published a report on crime and development in Africa which showed that Africa was extremely vulnerable to crime. First, half of its population was under 30. Secondly, it experienced mass poverty and unemployment. Thirdly, many African countries were affected by civil war, either directly or indirectly, which made weapons readily available. Fourthly, the gap in income between the richest and poorest was much greater than in Europe or the United States of America. Fifthly, Africa's rate of urbanization was the fastest growing rate in the world. People were flocking to cities without any basic amenities, including electricity and water. Sixthly, Africa spent approximately one tenth of what Western Europe and North America spent on judicial systems.

27. The weak judicial system made corruption a significant problem in Africa. Such factors made places like Africa and the Caribbean vulnerable. Furthermore, the high rate of crime discouraged foreign investment. Domestic savings tended to be invested abroad. White collar workers migrated abroad for better wages. UNODC was not proposing, however, increasing the number of policemen. Rather, only development could break the vicious circle of crime and poverty.

28. With respect to drugs, crime and terrorism, in the case of Afghanistan, it was clear that the high level of illicit activities prevailing in that country was rooted not only in poverty but also lack of control over the national territory. When combined, those two conditions allowed crime, drug trafficking and terrorism to flourish.

29. Concerning the question raised about the death penalty, the United Nations stood for its abolition. No

one had the right, including organized institutions such as Governments, to take the lives of others. Furthermore, it had been shown that severe sentences did not necessarily translate into lower crime rates. Therefore, the abolition of the death penalty was needed throughout the world.

30. **Ms. Martins** (Portugal), speaking on behalf of the European Union, the candidate countries, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and Turkey, the stabilization and association process countries and possible candidates, Iceland and Montenegro, said that her delegation supported the work of the United Nations Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice Programme in fostering international cooperation in combating crime, in particular through its technical cooperation capacity.

31. The European Union remained committed to providing technical assistance to third countries, in particular developing countries, in the area of crime prevention and criminal justice. It was also committed to completing the process of ratification of the Convention against Transnational Organized Crime and the Protocols thereto as soon as possible. The European Union was also developing mechanisms to facilitate police and judicial cooperation between States, relating, in particular, to joint investigations, extradition, mutual legal assistance in criminal matters and asset recovery.

32. The Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children, supplementing the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime provided a useful global tool to combat human trafficking. The European Union supported the efforts of UNODC to facilitate negotiations on the Protocol and to promote the Global Initiative to Fight Human Trafficking and Modern Slavery. Corruption was an obstacle to sustainable development and good governance. Her delegation encouraged all parties to the United Nations Convention against Corruption to work towards its successful implementation.

33. Countering international terrorism remained high on the agenda of the European Union. Her delegation commended the work of the Counter-Terrorism Implementation Task Force and called for its appropriate funding without delay. The United Nations Counter-Terrorism Online Handbook had also been very useful in helping to implement the United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy. The European Union stood ready to assist the Task Force in implementing the Strategy and would focus on important issues such as preventing radicalization and securing human rights while fighting terrorism.

34. The European Union continued to engage in political and technical dialogue and cooperate with key countries and regions on the basis of the principle of shared responsibility. With international drug-related cooperation projects amounting to some 760 million euros in 2005, the European Union was the largest international contributor and a leading player in global efforts against drugs. The international community must endeavour to find ways to react promptly to new challenges such as the growing presence of drug-trafficking organizations in fragile States and HIV/AIDS transmission via intravenous drug use.

35. The European Union and UNODC must work together to avoid duplication and to address the problem of drug use, drug dependence and drug-related health and social consequences. The European Union stood ready to seek common platforms with other groups and regions, always bearing in mind the need to ensure a balanced approach between demand reduction and supply reduction of illicit drugs.

36. **Mr. Maziya** (Swaziland), speaking on behalf of the States members of the Southern African Development Community (SADC), said that crime prevention, criminal justice improvement and international drug control were intertwined pursuits. SADC Governments were determined to jointly fight organized crime, but lack of human, financial and material resources hampered the administration of justice. The international community's assistance in combating crime was valuable and should continue in view of the commitments made at the Eleventh United Nations Congress on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice regarding the issues addressed in the report entitled "Bangkok Declaration on Synergies and Responses: Strategic Alliances in Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice" (A/CONF.203/18): transnational organized crime, international cooperation against terrorism, corruption, economic and financial crimes, crime prevention standards and criminal justice.

37. Technical cooperation was indispensable to democracy and contributed to peace and stability. Regional cooperation initiatives, such as human rights training programmes carried out by the Southern

African Regional Police Chiefs Cooperation Organization (SARPCCO), were under way. SARPCCO carried out joint operations to locate clandestine drug-manufacturing laboratories and provided assistance to certain countries in the eradication of cannabis fields. The impact of the drug problem was particularly acute on developing countries. The Political Declaration adopted at the twentieth special session of the General Assembly and the related action plans and measures emanating from the session constituted a high-level comprehensive commitment.

38. Significant progress had been made towards meeting the 2008 goals set in that framework. A review process focused on the implementation of commitments made at the special session would be helpful in view of further action. SADC welcomed recommendations made by the Commission on Narcotic Drugs at its fiftieth session, as contained in the Secretary-General's report (A/62/117), regarding the inclusion of measures against drugs in sustainable economic development strategies. Moreover, SADC supported the conclusions of the 2005 Round Table for Africa, which had been held in Abuja and had endorsed a Programme of Action, 2006-2010 addressing crime, insecurity and underdevelopment in Africa.

39. The current proliferation of hard drugs on the continent gave particular cause for concern. SADC worked with other regional and international anti-drug trafficking organizations, such as INTERPOL, and welcomed the meeting of heads of African National Drug Services, held in Arusha on in July 2007. That meeting had addressed, inter alia, cocaine and heroine smuggling in Africa's subregions, synthetic-drugs trafficking in southern Africa and continent-wide cannabis production, consumption and export. Long and porous borders coupled with insufficient resources had been identified as a major problem. International cooperation, in the form of information exchange and joint operations, should be enhanced. SADC welcomed the implementation of several initiatives launched by the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) with a view to strengthening regional cooperation in southern Africa.

40. International drug trafficking had become a financial pillar of international terrorism, which found fertile ground in developing countries. A training workshop for southern Africa countries on international cooperation in the fight against terrorism and its financing held in December 2006 had recommended that UNODC and its partners should provide SADC member States with technical assistance in incorporating the provisions of universal legal instruments on terrorism into national legal systems and with training for criminal justice and law enforcement officials. Accordingly, a workshop for SADC countries had been organized to promote training in the implementation of Security Council resolutions on terrorism.

41. UNODC support to the Commission on Narcotic Drugs and its subsidiary bodies and to Member States through technical assistance, legal advice and research was commendable, and further help should be provided in implementing the provisions of the international legal instruments on drug trafficking, including preventive measures, criminalization and enhanced international cooperation. The United Nations African Institute for the Prevention of Crime and the Treatment of Offenders, which had the potential to assist States to develop tailored initiatives and programmes against crime and strengthen criminal justice systems, required support by the international community. Such backing was also needed in the areas of police equipment and judiciary and correctional services in the region.

42. The increasing number of training activities for law enforcement officials, judges, prosecutors and prison officers had been encouraging. It was essential to provide police practitioners with the knowledge, skills and attitudes necessary for thorough research, crime-trend analysis, victim- and offender-profile generation and identification of key information for crime prevention. Advisory services should continue to be provided in the areas of national legislation reform and compliance with international criminal justice standards.

43. **Mr. Dapkiunas** (Belarus), speaking on behalf of the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS), said that the CIS commended the report of the Secretary-General on strengthening the United Nations Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice Programme, in particular its technical cooperation capacity (A/62/126), and emphasized the need to provide adequate funding for UNODC. The work of the Office was essential in combating international crime.

44. His delegation welcomed the entry into force of the International Convention for the Suppression of Acts of Nuclear Terrorism. The United Nations Global

Counter-Terrorism Strategy was a strong basis for combating international terrorism. The lack of an internationally agreed legal definition of terrorism complicated counter-terrorism efforts. His delegation, therefore, supported the prompt negotiation of a comprehensive convention on international terrorism.

45. As trafficking in illicit drugs posed a major threat to CIS countries, his delegation called for the adoption of a range of regional and international measures to combat them. Combating corruption was another priority for Belarus. It therefore welcomed the work done at the first session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Convention against Corruption. The CIS members were making concerted efforts to combat money-laundering and prevent the proceeds of crime from financing terrorist activities.

46. His delegation noted with concern the problem of illegal migration, which was being used by organized criminal groups as well as by terrorist and extremist organizations as a cover for their activities. He drew attention to General Assembly resolution 61/180 on improving the coordination of efforts against trafficking in persons and commended the Global Initiative to Fight Human Trafficking and Modern Slavery.

47. Belarus had led efforts at the 2005 World Summit to form a global partnership to combat that scourge. It welcomed the establishment of the UNODC website on human trafficking and looked forward to the Vienna Forum to be held in February 2008. He regretted that the inter-agency coordination group on trafficking in persons had not begun its work and called on the international community to finance it adequately. Lastly, his delegation called on all States to support the proposal to hold thematic discussions on human trafficking during the sixty-second session of the General Assembly.

48. **Mr. Saeed** (Sudan) said that his country was making efforts to implement regional and international agreements to fight money-laundering, human trafficking, and transnational organized crime. The United Nations African Institute for the Prevention of Crime and the Treatment of Offenders, whose Governing Board the Sudan currently chaired, had made great efforts with limited resources. The Sudan called on donors to provide the Institute with sufficient funding and looked forward to continued support for it from sister States in Africa. Although his country itself did not have a serious drug problem, its geographic location meant that its territory might be used by drug smugglers as a transit zone, and it would continue its efforts to strengthen regional cooperation to eradicate the scourge of drugs. In the age of globalization, eradication of globalized crime demanded greater coordination and, in particular, technical support and capacity-building for developing countries.

49. **Mr. Hayee** (Pakistan) noted that, along with various advantages, globalization had facilitated transnational crime, with such negative effects as financial scams, money-laundering, human trafficking and illicit drugs trafficking, which were a growing concern for Governments and civil society. Poverty, social exclusion and lack of prospects were the main causes of vulnerability to drug abuse. Since criminal organizations took advantage of political instability and socio-economic weakness, the most appropriate solutions to crime-related problems in the world's less developed areas were alternative development and livelihood practices and poverty eradication programmes.

50. Pakistan had succeeded in eliminating illicit crops through a combination of law enforcement measures, alternative development initiatives and contributing to international efforts aimed at stopping the outflow of drugs from the neighbouring region and the inflow of precursor chemicals for drug production. His Government had signed 26 memorandums of understanding and 28 extradition treaties with other countries and had set up the National Response Centre for Cyber Crimes and the Automated Finger Print Identification System. Moreover, special anti-human trafficking and anti-cyber crime units had been established in the Federal Investigation Agency; a personal identification and evaluation system had been set up to easily identify travellers and monitor immigration efficiently; in cooperation with the Asian Development Bank, a programme had been launched for criminal justice reform and for promoting police accountability and responsiveness; and a special anti-narcotics force had been organized to provide drug-related preventive education, treatment and rehabilitation.

51. UNODC could more effectively promote universal accession to sectoral conventions on terrorism and to crime-related legal instruments by taking into account the specific political conditions prevalent in States and regions. Moreover, special

attention should be paid to emerging trends that characterized urban crime, fiscal misappropriation, identity-related crime, sexual exploitation, trafficking in women and children and the illicit trade in forest products. To that end, UNODC should receive full financial and political support.

52. **Ms. Phommachanh** (Lao People's Democratic Republic) said that, since aggressive counter-narcotic measures did not suffice for stemming drug-trafficking, concerted action by drug-producing and drug-consuming countries was required. Her country had once been the world's third largest producer of illicit opium and, in 1998, had displayed the highest rate of opium addiction. As a State party to three international conventions on narcotic drugs, the Lao People's Democratic Republic had taken various measures to eliminate illicit opium poppy cultivation, including the adoption of a national programme strategy in 2000 and the enactment of appropriate legislation. As a result, poppy cultivation had been reduced by more than 93 per cent. Moreover, the Lao Government had improved the drug-control legal framework and strengthened law-enforcement capacity to reduce drug trafficking.

53. However, it was still necessary to provide all former opium poppy farmers with sustainable alternative livelihoods, to treat some 12,000 remaining opium addicts and prevent new cases of addiction, to address the growing problems of amphetamine-type stimulant (ATS) abuse and trafficking, and to strengthen the relevant legislative, judicial and law-enforcement capacities. The problems requiring such action were compounded by the related issues of human trafficking, injection drug use (IDU) and risk of HIV/AIDS infection.

54. In view of those issues, the Lao Government and UNODC had jointly adopted for the period 2006-2009 a three-year "national programme strategy for the post-opium scenario", which mainly addressed the root causes of opium production and abuse and focused on long-term socio-economic development for reducing poverty among former opium poppy growers, comprehensive treatment and rehabilitation for the remaining opium addicts, preventive education to discourage drug use among young people and law enforcement. The strategy further addressed the ever greater threat of ATS trafficking and abuse. However, to ensure that those tasks were effectively carried out, coordinated support by partner countries in the region and by the international community was urgently needed.

55. **Ms. Jahan** (Bangladesh), underlining that crime was both the cause and consequence of poverty, insecurity and underdevelopment, said that combating and preventing crime were a major concern for her Government, which considered criminal justice reform and affordability as policy priorities. Specific reforms had been carried out, including the establishment of a monitoring cell and a rapid action battalion for violent crimes.

56. With regard to the UNODC strategy for the period 2008-2011, she stressed the need for further strengthening the United Nations Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice Programme and the role of its Commission, building strategic partnerships with donors to mobilize resources and developing cooperation with other United Nations bodies. The growing number of countries adhering to the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime was encouraging. Compliance with the treaty and mobilization of assistance to States with scarce resources were keys to effective transnational crime control. Accordingly, her country supported all relevant regional and international initiatives in this regard.

57. At the national level, her country had taken legislative measures to streamline criminal justice and crime prevention. Bangladesh had acceded to the United Nations Convention against Corruption, which was expected not only to reduce corruption, but also to help recover ill-gotten proceeds hoarded abroad. The national Anti-Corruption Commission had been reorganized and aimed at raising public awareness of the problem. Progress had been made with regard to the separation of the judiciary from the executive. Bangladesh had recently acceded to the International Convention for the Suppression of Acts of Nuclear Terrorism, was currently a party to all terrorism-related United Nations conventions and supported relevant regional commitments and initiatives through the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) Regional Convention on Suppression of Terrorism.

58. In 2007, the Government had enacted a money-laundering prevention ordinance, empowering the Anti-Corruption Commission to investigate offences in the area in question. A new money-laundering prevention act was being prepared. Bangladesh welcomed the Global Initiative to Fight Human Trafficking initiated

by UNODC and in 2002 had ratified the SAARC Convention on Preventing and Combating Trafficking in Women and Children for Prostitution. The 1993 Suppression of Immoral Trafficking Act was a major piece of domestic legislation in that area.

59. Committed to tackling all aspects of the drug problem, Bangladesh had ratified the three major United Nations drug conventions of 1961, 1971 and 1988 and the 1990 SAARC Convention on Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances. The national authorities regularly sent reports on drug cases, arrests and seizures to the SAARC Drug Offences Monitoring Desk in Colombo and exchanged information on drug trafficking with other SAARC countries. Bangladesh had signed a number of bilateral agreements and memorandums of understanding with other countries to stem drug trafficking and the diversion of precursor chemicals and was ready to expand such cooperation.

60. The Government had also enacted legislation in line with the United Nations drug conventions. The law provided for harsh penalties for drug offenders. Opium and cannabis were totally prohibited. Psychotropic substances had been included in the category of controlled drugs in compliance with the 1971 United Nations Convention on Psychotropic Substances. The Government has also formulated a national drug demand reduction strategy comprising preventive education, treatment and rehabilitation programmes.

61. **Ms. Blum** (Colombia) said that Colombia's results had borne testimony to its commitment to drug control. The World Drug Report 2007, published by UNODC, had acknowledged Colombia's progress and had highlighted the unprecedented level of eradication achieved: the number of hectares of coca bush under cultivation had fallen by 52 per cent between 2000 and 2006.

62. The holistic approach of UNODC had placed much emphasis on social reconstruction, community and institution-building, environmental protection and the promotion of productive projects, all of which had contributed to her country's success. The work of UNODC had also been important in restoring a sense of hope for communities that had abandoned illicit drug production. Alternative development was an essential component of sustainability in areas rescued from the influence of drug trafficking. In that vein, Colombia wished to stress the need for market access, on preferential terms, for products originating in those communities.

63. In Colombia, the fight against drugs was a vital component of the strategy to consolidate democracy and social development. None of Colombia's efforts would be effective without shared responsibility, nor would they have been possible without the support of the international community. Every gap created by globalization was exploited by drug traffickers to endanger the well-being, public health, sustainable development and sovereignty of States. In that regard, the connection between international terrorism and the world drug problem was increasingly evident. The illicit gains of drug trafficking often financed terrorist acts.

64. Colombia was irrevocably committed to working at the bilateral, regional and multilateral levels in efforts to cope with the global threat posed by the drug problem. Bearing in mind the upward trend in cocaine use in Europe, and taking into account the fact that the drug problem could be effectively solved only through demand and supply reduction, Colombia joined previous speakers in their appeal for holistic and sustained assistance, approaches and policies. A strategy based on the cumulative knowledge of the world drug market dynamics would serve as an effective tool to stabilize the market and encourage overall reduction. The international community should not limit its efforts to containing the problem, but, rather, should aim at defeating the criminal enterprises that perpetuated it.

65. **Mr. Park** Hee-kwon (Republic of Korea) said that, with rapid technological advances and deepening globalization, the control of narcotic drugs was an issue that called for a greater level of shared responsibility among nations, international organizations and non-governmental organizations (NGOs). Despite the commendable work of the United Nations and other international bodies, much remained to be done in terms of controlling substances such as cocaine, opium, synthetic drugs, cannabis and precursor chemicals. The laws, regulations, techniques and skills available to law enforcement agencies for the identification and seizure of drugs could not keep apace of trends in drug production and smuggling. The issue of rampant opium production in southern Afghanistan, in spite of the Government's sincere efforts, was a typical example that warranted serious

attention and assistance from the international community.

66. The Republic of Korea wished to continue its active role in pooling efforts with other States and international organizations in order to achieve a drug-free world. He reaffirmed his Government's commitment to the goals and targets on demand and supply reduction, as set by the twentieth special session of the General Assembly. Transnational organized crime, corruption, terrorism and cyber-crime had emerged as major threats to global security and development. No single country could eliminate those crimes through its own capabilities. As part of its commitment to strengthening the collective effort, the Republic of Korea had been working closely with UNODC and the United Nations Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice.

67. **Mr. Jia** Guide (China) said that, according to the World Drug Report 2007 issued by the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, the world's drug problem was being contained, and the area of land under cultivation for illegal drugs continued to decrease. Member States had made notable progress towards achieving the goals set forth at the twentieth special session of the General Assembly. His delegation viewed that progress as the result of the common efforts of counter-narcotics agencies and Governments over many years. However, the world drug problem remained serious, and counter-narcotics efforts faced a long and difficult road. For counter-narcotics work to stabilize its effectiveness, three areas required special attention. The first was places of concentrated production, such as Afghanistan for opium, which should be addressed on a priority basis. China supported any effective international cooperation to deal with the drug problem in Afghanistan and was willing to continue participating in the Paris process.

68. The second area was the dual approach, by which not only drug production but the demand for drugs were addressed. Drug-producing and -consuming countries shared the responsibility to take coordinated action in that regard. The third was addressing the roots of the problem, by not only eradicating drug production but also taking measures to ensure food security and reduce poverty in drug-producing areas. China supported the discussion and evaluation of progress made towards the achievement of the counter-narcotics goals of the special session, the reviewing of implementation of the relevant measures, and the setting of goals for future counter-narcotics work.

69. For many years, China had undertaken counter-narcotics work from the viewpoint of building a harmonious society and had accomplished much in formulating national counter-narcotics strategies and legislation and mobilizing popular participation in counter-narcotics activities, as well as in creating counter-narcotics publicity, addiction-recovery programmes, interdicting drug flows and counter-narcotics law enforcement. His country emphasized the importance of regulating chemical precursors, as well as cooperation among Government agencies responsible for customs, commerce, security and pharmaceuticals in that regard. China consistently took an active role in fulfilling its obligations under international counter-narcotics agreements, undertaking cooperation with all relevant actors with regard to developing substitutes, exchanging information and enforcing unified legislation. It had provided aid in substitute-crop production to Myanmar and Laos for many years, and in 2006 had signed a cooperation agreement with Afghanistan on prohibiting the trade in and use of narcotics and psychotropic drugs. It was also undertaking counter-narcotics law-enforcement cooperation with neighbouring countries, the United States of America, Canada and Australia.

70. While narcotics were coming under greater control, the problems of organized transnational corruption, money-laundering, terrorism, and human trafficking were becoming more serious around the globe, and it was the shared responsibility of the international community to combat those phenomena. China was pleased to note that increasing numbers of countries had signed the United Nations Convention against Corruption and the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime providing a legal foundation for combating and controlling criminal activity of all kinds as well as for international cooperation on extradition, cooperative law enforcement, the return of property, and technical assistance. The Government had recently established its own anti-corruption body at the ministerial level, responsible for coordinating anti-corruption work throughout the country, coordinating legislation and policy formulation as well as supervisory guidelines. That action not only greatly increased the efficacy of China's internal anti-corruption efforts but also

enhanced its ability to undertake exchanges and cooperation at the international level.

71. China sincerely hoped that concerned countries would make use of the existing international agreements and other possible cooperation mechanisms to broaden law-enforcement cooperation, especially in the areas of extradition, legal assistance, and the return of property and provide the necessary technical support to developing countries in order to raise their ability to fulfil their treaty obligations and thus achieve genuine implementation of the regulations of those treaties. China had taken note of the progress made in the Global Initiative to Fight Human Trafficking and Modern Slavery and was actively participating in the implementation process. It looked forward to the upcoming Vienna Forum in February 2008, in the hope that it would be an important venue for exchanging information and experience in combating human trafficking. China thanked UNODC and the Commission on Narcotic Drugs for their excellent work over the past year and expressed its continuing support for their future efforts in those fields.

72. **Ms. Abdelhak** (Algeria) said that international cooperation was crucial in formulating an effective response to transnational organized crime, the perpetrators of which used increasingly advanced technologies to destabilize the political, social and economic development and security of States. The link between organized crime and terrorism further complicated efforts to counter crime.

73. Algeria welcomed the international instruments on transnational organized crime and corruption as major assets which would be strengthened by ratification, and by Member States' support for the work of the Conferences of the Parties. Universal ratification of those instruments would allow the international community to close legislative loopholes and contradictions that criminal organizations exploited to their benefit. Harmonization of legislation would also strengthen and consolidate the work of the Conferences of the Parties by providing a forum for the sharing of experience and practices.

74. Her delegation welcomed the efforts of UNODC to achieve universal acceptance and the harmonization of laws. Member States should use the UNODC manuals and provide UNODC with data that would assist the Office in its analyses. They should also participate in forums on the various aspects of transnational crime, and share their experience.

75. Algeria was aware of the dangers posed by transnational crime and its growing links to terrorism, having been a victim of terrorist attacks for more than a decade. Not only had Algeria ratified the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime, and its Protocols and the United Nations Convention against Corruption, her Government had promptly incorporated them into domestic legislation and adapted the judicial apparatus in order to keep pace with developments. Algeria had always supported UNODC and attached high priority to fulfilling its reporting obligations and responding to the Office's questionnaires.

76. Drug trafficking posed a constant threat to the health, security and well-being of mankind, in particular to young people, and had generated new problems for societies worldwide, constituting a grave trend that necessitated international cooperation and urgent global action. Since Algeria had become a transit State for drugs, the Government had taken on the challenge of drug control by focusing on legislation, drug treatment and public information.

77. However, domestic efforts alone would not be enough to stem the flow of drugs through its territory since neighbouring drug-producing centres and clandestine immigration fuelled cross-border trafficking. Regional and international cooperation should be at the centre of UNODC strategy for the period 2008-2011, as it was the only approach that was likely to stem the drug trade. Lastly, her Government fully supported the review of progress achieved in meeting the goals and targets set by the twentieth special session of the General Assembly.

78. **Ms. McCampbell** (United States of America) said that drug abuse in the United States was stable, and overall illicit drug use among teenagers was at a five-year low. However, there was no room for complacency since drug use, especially the misuse of prescription drugs, continued to be a problem. Drug use was also on the rise worldwide and there was need for vigilance.

79. The rising trend in the production, trafficking and abuse of methamphetamine was of great concern. Its illicit manufacture offered huge profits because it could be produced easily, at low cost, and anywhere. It was a challenge to ensure that legitimate pharmaceutical

manufacturers had access to the chemicals that they needed, while preventing their diversion for illegitimate commerce.

80. The International Narcotics Control Board was a particularly effective partner in the fight against methamphetamine. Estimates provided by States of their legitimate domestic needs for key precursor chemicals had made it possible for diversion to be more accurately identified, making it increasingly difficult for traffickers to operate.

81. Illegal trafficking of controlled pharmaceuticals through the Internet was another emerging trend that required greater awareness. Criminal elements used every opportunity to broaden their expertise. Support for the United Nations instruments on organized crime and corruption would intensify international efforts to counter such expansion, and strengthen mutual cooperation in confronting cross-border crimes. The United States was pleased to announce that it would contribute $1.7 million to UNODC in 2007 for technical assistance in the implementation of the Convention against Transnational Organized Crime and the Convention against Corruption.

82. A global campaign should be launched to maintain pressure on drug traffickers and the networks that were responsible for drug addiction in many countries. Attacking drugs at their source was the most effective means of keeping them off the market. Although there had been tremendous progress in that regard there remained some concern that drug traffickers were consolidating their activities and had joined forces to undermine Governments. For example, in Afghanistan, despite the stringent measures imposed to confront drug trafficking, one third of the economy was opium-based. That had led to widespread public corruption, jeopardized economic growth and strengthened the insurgency. However, the 13 northern provinces, where public security was strong and alternative development programmes had been initiated, were now free of poppy production.

83. Curbing the opium trade in Afghanistan was a long-term challenge and would require the support of all Member States. The same was true elsewhere in the world, and the international community should assume the responsibility to prevent backsliding in meeting the commitments of the twentieth special session of the General Assembly. Joint training and operations could pay significant dividends, and it was hoped that the review process would identify further ways of expanding cooperation. The lessons learned by Member States and regional organizations were indispensable, and it was crucial that United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime received the full support of all stakeholders.

84. **Mr. Tanin** (Afghanistan) said that his country was strongly committed to fighting the narcotics trade, corruption and terrorism, through a mix of law enforcement and economic measures. UNODC had supported the Ministry of Counter Narcotics in drafting strategic guidelines, mobilizing resources to address the problems associated with drug production and trafficking, and in backing the Government's efforts to fight corruption.

85. The continued support of the international community in facilitating the implementation of a comprehensive counter-narcotics strategy and an anti-corruption plan of action was indispensable. In January 2006, Afghanistan had adopted a comprehensive strategy, outlining the key areas on which the fight against illicit narcotics trading would focus. Since then, numerous measures had been undertaken by the Government, but serious challenges remained. According to an August 2007 survey, poppy cultivation had increased by 17 per cent and potential opium production by 34 per cent. Continued terrorist activity, extreme poverty, and economic constraints, coupled with pressure from traffickers and local criminal groups and the limited capacity of the law enforcement bodies had led to the expansion of poppy cultivation.

86. Insecurity and the narcotics trade were intertwined, and both needed to be approached holistically. There had been some success in creating 14 poppy-free provinces in areas where security and governance had improved, but poppy cultivation had risen to unprecedented levels in southern Afghanistan, where the security situation had deteriorated. Therefore, focus must be placed on simultaneously breaking the nexus between narcotics and terrorism.

87. International support for Afghanistan's efforts to break the link between illegal drug production and trafficking and the financing of terrorist activities was also vital for achieving a stable and peaceful State. The Government was grateful for the support of the international community, including the specialized agencies, especially in the eradication of poppy crops,

prosecution of drug traffickers and corrupt officials, and assistance in boosting development throughout Afghanistan.

88. Clearly, success in the fight against narcotics would require equal effort on the part of transit and consumer States, based on the principle of shared responsibility. Stringent enforcement measures for border controls and mutual cooperation among judicial and law enforcement authorities of those countries would contribute greatly to the fight against narcotic drugs. In that regard, he welcomed the 2007 trilateral agreement signed by Afghanistan, the Islamic Republic of Iran and Pakistan on increased joint border operations and information sharing.

89. The fight against narcotics required patience and collaboration at the international, regional and subregional levels. Efforts to combat drug trafficking had been inherently linked to attempts to improve security and good governance, strengthen the rule of law, and promote social and economic development. The fight against corruption remained among Afghanistan's top priorities for State-building. An anti-corruption commission had been established as one such initiative. Lastly, Afghanistan's recent ratification of the United Nations Convention against Corruption represented an important step in its fight against corruption, which was an ongoing process requiring institutional capacity-building.

90. **Mr. Masambasita** (African Institute for the Prevention of Crime and the Treatment of Offenders (UNAFRI)) said that the Institute regarded crime as a major obstacle to harmonious and sustainable socio-economic development in Africa, and he appealed to development organizations and other institutions to give greater consideration to the impact of crime on development. Member States and the broader international community should support UNAFRI financially since it was a regional mechanism, which, given the necessary resources, could contribute meaningfully to reducing poverty and improve access to public services.

91. The Institute was keenly aware of the devastating impact of crime on national economies. As a centre for providing expertise in the areas of crime control and prevention, and bearing in mind the regular requests for technical assistance from African States, UNAFRI was determined to do more to combat crime and to strengthen the rule of law and the criminal justice systems in member countries. As a mechanism for regional integration, the Institute's main thrust had been to encourage Member States to sign and ratify the relevant international instruments and to incorporate those provisions into domestic legislation in order to strengthen their crime prevention capacity.

92. Funding from the United Nations and other sources would boost the effectiveness of UNAFRI in meeting the needs of African States. In that context, therefore, he reiterated the appeal made by the Institute's Governing Board to the General Assembly to consider favourably the resolution for mobilizing support from the United Nations regular budget, as stated in paragraph 42 of the Secretary-General's report on UNAFRI (A/62/127).

The meeting rose at 6.25 p.m.

United Nations

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Chairman: Mr. Wolfe .... (Jamaica)

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* Items which the Committee has decided to consider together.

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The meeting was called to order at 10.05 a.m.

Agenda item 106: Crime prevention and criminal justice (*continued*) (A/62/84, A/62/126, A/62/127; A/C.3/62/L.2 and L.3)

Agenda item 107: International drug control (*continued*) (A/62/117)

1. **Mr. Rogachev** (Russian Federation) said that his delegation aligned itself with the statements made by the representatives of Belarus and Kazakhstan on behalf of the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS). New challenges posed by transnational organized crime and drug trafficking in a globalized world called for concerted international efforts and a strengthening of relevant United Nations programmes and institutions. Accession to the Convention against Transnational Organized Crime and its Protocols and the Convention against Corruption must be broadened and the capacity of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) improved. The Russian Federation attached special priority to combating human trafficking and was enhancing both legislation and enforcement as well as strengthening international cooperation to that end.

2. The Organization's drug control capacities should be strengthened to deal with an increasingly difficult world drug situation. The new phenomenon of drug-based economies was a particular cause for concern. Narcotics production in Afghanistan was escalating, allowing drug trafficking to flourish and financing extremists. International efforts had not succeeded in easing the situation, and Afghanistan continued to pose a drug threat well beyond its borders. In that connection, he wished to draw attention to the Second Ministerial Conference on Drug Trafficking Routes from Afghanistan held in Moscow in June 2006, the outcome of which could form a basis for international cooperation on the issue. Drug control efforts should focus also on territories neighbouring Afghanistan, with a view to creating anti-drug and financial security belts. The Russian Federation continued to contribute to such efforts and urged the international community to do likewise.

3. **Mr. Rastam** (Malaysia) said that transnational crime continued to be a serious threat to international security and that investment by countries in basic crime prevention efforts yielded benefits on the local, national, regional and international levels. Diverging views existed on how best to tackle the threats posed by transnational crime, as did different levels of development among countries in their law enforcement and legal capacities. Therefore, continued cooperation, in the form of information sharing, capacity-building, and technology transfer, was important in combating transnational crime.

4. Malaysia was a party to the Convention against Transnational Organized Crime, which recognized that the problem could be solved only through close international cooperation. Bilateral cooperation between neighbours on issues of similar concern remained an effective and important way of addressing the problem. Information and intelligence sharing should be done on the basis of need and reciprocity, within the limits of the domestic legislation and country regulations, and taking into account the sensitivity of the information.

5. At the regional level, Malaysia had been working with its ASEAN partners to strengthen the legislative and procedural framework for practical cooperation in combating crime. It had spearheaded the formulation of the regional Treaty on Mutual Legal Assistance in Criminal Matters, which facilitated cross-border cooperation in criminal investigations and the gathering of evidence for court proceedings.

6. Domestically, Malaysian laws were constantly being reviewed to respond to the ever-changing nature and growing complexity of crime. Malaysia rendered and requested mutual legal assistance in information sharing under the 2002 Mutual Assistance in Criminal Matters Act. Its Anti-Trafficking in Persons Act had recently come into force in August of that year. As trafficking in persons was multifaceted and complex, international initiatives should also focus on the developmental and security issues within the countries of origin. Malaysia welcomed those countries' initiatives to strengthen their own self-regulation measures in order to stamp out human trafficking.

7. On the issue of anti-money-laundering and the counter-financing of terrorism, the Asia-Pacific Group on Money Laundering, a regional financial action task force had conducted a mutual evaluation exercise of Malaysia's measures in that field early that year and had found that Malaysia was in the top two tiers of compliant countries on 33 of the recommendations, and partially compliant on 15. Malaysia would strive

further to strengthen its efforts to ensure better compliance in the future.

8. Illicit drug trafficking, transnational in nature, could not be controlled or eradicated by any one country on its own. Strong international support and cooperation were vital in the efforts of national governments to combat the problem. His country had consistently called for stringent measures to curb illicit drug trafficking. Comprehensive steps were being taken by Malaysia's National Anti-Drug Agency to create a drug-free generation by 2023.

9. **Mr. Yamaguchi** (Japan) said that in order to reduce the supply of illegal drugs, every country's law enforcement agencies needed to have adequate power and appropriate regulations in place against illegal trafficking in narcotic drugs. At the fiftieth session of the United Nations Commission on Narcotic Drugs in March, Japan had tabled the draft resolution on use of drug characterization and chemical profiling in support of drug law enforcement intelligence-gathering and operational work, as well as trend analysis, which had been adopted by consensus and had to be followed up.

10. A reduction in the demand for drugs required a reduction in the number of people abusing drugs. In Japan, both the Government and civil society had waged a vigorous campaign on the issue. The Government monitored the process of following up the outcome of the twentieth special session of the General Assembly on the world drug problem, and would participate actively in the next session of the United Nations Commission on Narcotic Drugs.

11. Japan was taking a variety of steps to combat human trafficking based on the Action Plan for Trafficking in Persons. It was discussing countermeasures that might be taken with countries that sent and countries that received victims of trafficking. To protect victims, his country was also implementing a rehabilitation programme through UNODC. In addition, it had taken steps against corruption, such as promoting technical support, training on the prevention of corruption, and dispatching technical experts to other countries through the Japan International Cooperation Agency.

12. As those who perpetrated transnational organized crime often based their operations in countries where the administration of criminal justice and law enforcement were inadequate, those countries should be given support to address their deficiencies. The United Nations Asia and Far East Institute for the Prevention of Crime and the Treatment of Offenders (UNAFEI) was based in Japan and offered training courses for officers in charge of criminal justice systems in the Asia-Pacific region. His country welcomed the adoption of the Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy by the General Assembly and pledged to continue to contribute to the implementation of the Strategy in cooperation with other Member States.

13. Japan appreciated the role that UNODC played in the fields of drugs and crime and welcomed the Office's steps to promote reform and create an "evaluation culture". It was important for UNODC to continue striving to enhance the quality of its work and follow it up in a timely and appropriate manner. Given its limitations in resources, mandate and specific area of expertise, the Office needed to promote cooperation with related organizations and avoid duplicating projects being conducted elsewhere. Lastly, UNODC should also be prudent about moving into new areas, especially if that would have a serious impact on the policies of Member States.

14. **Mr. Emadi** (Islamic Republic of Iran) said that the issue of illicit drug production and trafficking was one of the most serious problems that the international community faced, a problem that required collective and concerted efforts. However, despite action taken by States and international organizations to combat illicit drug production, consumption and trafficking, there was no satisfactory prospect of an immediate solution.

15. The Islamic Republic of Iran, sharing borders with the Golden Crescent countries, stood on the forefront in combating drug abuse and smuggling worldwide. Following the rise of the Taliban in Afghanistan, which led to an unprecedented increase in opium production in that country, the Islamic Republic of Iran was confronted with large amounts of narcotics transported from Afghanistan to other countries through Iranian territory. His Government's unwanted fight against that phenomenon had been highly costly in terms of lives lost and money spent.

16. The Iranian Government was aware of the difficulties faced by the current Government of Afghanistan. However, the presence of coalition forces in Afghanistan had not led to the eradication or even to the reduction of the deep-rooted problem. Instead, they

had demonstrated indifference to the increased cultivation of opiates there.

17. International bodies, especially UNODC, had recognized the massive and effective actions of Iranian forces against drug consignments and narcotics trafficking networks. His Government had taken measures to minimize the benefits of the illicit drug trade, such as mobilizing 30,000 troops along the joint borders with Afghanistan and Pakistan, and reinforcing the fortifications and control systems at border check-points in order to prevent the entry of trafficking caravans into the country. Those measures had resulted in the confiscation of massive amounts of narcotics, and the Islamic Republic of Iran had been ranked first in the world in narcotics confiscation, accounting for 80 per cent of global opium and heroin seizures.

18. His country had also signed cooperation agreements with over 30 countries on combating narcotics. In order to strengthen regional cooperation within the framework of the Economic Cooperation Organization (ECO), it had taken the initiative of establishing a Drug Combating Unit, as well as holding workshops on drug supply and demand reduction among ECO member States. Further, it had established regular contacts with senior anti-drug officials in Afghanistan and Pakistan and had cooperated closely with UNODC to coordinate measures that involved the three countries.

19. **Ms. Bowen** (Jamaica), speaking on behalf of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM), said that the international community had acknowledged the nexus between transnational organized crime and the drug trade. The global dimension of the problem required international efforts to deal with it, as a shared responsibility to be addressed in a multilateral setting. The approach to crime prevention and combating the drug trade must be in full conformity with the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations, in particular full respect for the sovereignty and territorial integrity of States, non-intervention in their internal affairs, and all human rights and fundamental freedoms.

20. The CARICOM countries were signatories to a number of international instruments in the area of crime prevention and drug control. They faced challenges, however, in applying those instruments at the domestic level, mainly due to lack of resources, and were exploring creative ways to bridge the gap through partnerships and subregional cooperation. CARICOM had expressed its dismay at the prospect of closing the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) office in Barbados, and did not consider its termination a closed matter. Its members were seriously in need of the services offered by the Office, and would continue to press for a reversal of the decision and demonstrate that the concerns of the people of the Caribbean were to be taken as seriously as any other group. CARICOM continued to cooperate with the European Union in the areas of demand and supply reduction, money-laundering and police and judicial cooperation.

21. The particular problems faced by CARICOM included disproportionately high crime rates in relation to population size, the illicit spread of small arms and light weapons, international demand for drugs and the effects of international terrorism. The deportation of criminals continued to have a destabilizing effect on societies in the region. Individuals were expelled by their adopted countries and returned, often with no remaining family or social support networks to assist their re-entry into those vulnerable societies. It would be far more advantageous for those countries to be able to put their scarce resources into schools rather than prisons. Its central location as an easy trans-shipment point between North and South America and Europe, while a geographical advantage, had also begun to pose significant challenges to its capacity to respond to drugs and crime.

22. The nexus between the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons and the drugs trade had also been well established. CARICOM countries were not arms producers, nor did they trade in small arms, yet they continued to attract an abundance of such weapons illegally, challenging their capacity for crime prevention and placing added burdens on the criminal justice system. The high crime rate affected their development efforts and threatened internal security. They continued to emphasize the importance of the early and full implementation of the Programme of Action on Small Arms and Light Weapons as well as an international instrument enabling States to identify and trace illicit small arms and light weapons.

23. Lastly, there were some accomplishments in the Caribbean region in meeting the targets set by the General Assembly at its twentieth special session, especially in the areas of interdiction and legislation, including with regard to trafficking in persons. An integrated regional approach to security had helped to

strengthen the countries' capacity for border control and surveillance. The success of such initiatives, of course, would depend on serious financial commitments and competing demands on limited resources.

24. **Mr. Ritter** (Liechtenstein) said that the activities of UNODC were a crucial component of overall United Nations action to promote the rule of law worldwide. Long-term, sustained assistance was necessary for strengthening the capacity of criminal justice systems to apply those instruments in full conformity with the rule of law and human rights standards. Since international cooperation was at the heart of the fight against transnational organized crime and terrorism, ensuring the application of common standards for all States was a prerequisite for the success of efforts by the international community. Only an approach based on the rule of law and full respect for human rights could create the necessary trust among civil society and the private sector in the effectiveness of measures taken by State authorities and promote mutual trust among States.

25. Capacity-building was vitally important, and his delegation welcomed partnerships between UNODC and other organizations pursuing similar objectives, which had the potential to create synergies, avoid duplication of effort and ensure the targeted use of scarce resources. It commended the cooperation with the World Bank in the Stolen Asset Recovery Initiative and with the International Centre for Asset Recovery. The Centre had recently convened an expert group meeting to explore the application of the relevant provisions of the United Nations Convention against Corruption. Lastly, Liechtenstein had taken a number of measures to strengthen its prevention regime further against the abuse of its financial centre for criminal purposes. A delegation from the International Monetary Fund had also reviewed its regulatory and supervisory system for combating money-laundering and the financing of terrorism, and its report was expected in the near future.

26. **Mr. Sen** (India) said that the World Drug Report 2007 pointed to remarkable progress made by South-East Asia in eliminating sources of heroin supply, stemming from an 85 per cent reduction in poppy cultivation in the area. Global coca cultivation and cocaine production had also continued to decline in 2006. There were serious concerns, however, over the concentration of opium production in Afghanistan, which had accounted for 92 per cent of global opium production in 2006. In the context of the 2008 review of progress in achieving the goals and targets set at the twentieth special session of the General Assembly, all relevant stakeholders should identify the challenges still confronting them so that collective strategies could be devised to address them.

27. Terrorism remained one of the major challenges to international peace and security, undermining the very foundation of freedom, democracy and human rights and the continued existence of open and democratic societies. The adoption of the Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy signalled the will of the international community to combat that menace in a holistic and coordinated manner. Without the early adoption of a comprehensive convention on international terrorism, the global struggle against terrorism would remain incomplete. Zero tolerance for all forms of terrorism must be ensured. The growing role of UNODC in counter-terrorism efforts, especially its technical assistance activities, was highly appreciated, and had helped to increase the number of countries that had ratified all 12 universal legal instruments in that field.

28. In view of the increasing demands placed on UNODC for implementation assistance, his delegation supported the allocation of increased resources for its counter-terrorism activities from the United Nations regular budget and voluntary contributions. It also supported the statement by the representative of Jamaica on behalf of CARICOM expressing dismay at the closure of the UNODC office in the region. While efforts were under way to increase overall resources, the Office should use its existing resources in an optimal way. Financial efficiency was not the only criterion to be considered. As a specialized agency, the Office had been created to serve the interests of Member States, including the smallest and most vulnerable. Hence, in the view of his delegation, it must reconsider that issue.

29. India had been examining the need to amend its Code of Criminal Procedure to further streamline the criminal justice system, notably to provide special protections for women crime victims. It had signed the Convention against Transnational Organized Crime and its three Protocols and was taking steps towards their ratification. The nexus between transnational organized crime, illicit drugs, money-laundering and illegal arms transactions and international terrorism undermined

international peace and security. A world free of those scourges would require concerted effort at national, regional and international levels, and India remained fully committed to working closely with other countries to address those issues.

30. **Mr. Amoros Nuñez** (Cuba) said that his delegation was highly concerned at the growth of transnational organized crime and terrorism and the increasing diversification and sophistication of organized criminal groups. The current international system, driven by a thirst for profit and increasing globalization, created ideal conditions for those phenomena. No country could fight them by itself, but the necessary resources for a preventive approach had not been allocated. The major Powers had avoided their responsibility, assuming the role of judge or policeman instead.

31. The solutions to those problems had already been outlined in numerous documents negotiated and agreed in many forums, but were doomed to be forgotten. Much less would remain to be done if the international community had upheld the principle of the shared responsibility of all States in the fight against transnational crime, instead of some powerful nations unilaterally certifying good or bad behaviour. Further, the threat or use of force from a position of undisputed military superiority, including the doctrine of the right to a pre-emptive war, showed a lack of understanding that war destroyed nations and, rather than eradicating poverty, inequality, injustice, hunger, corruption and terrorism, tended to increase them. True cooperation must be promoted in the establishment of just, democratic, equitable and supportive international systems, which placed priority on the well-being of all peoples, without exclusion or discrimination.

32. There was no room for double standards in combating international crime. It was unacceptable that the United States of America, whose drug business generated tens of billions of dollars per year for traffickers, should judge others in matters of drug trafficking. Despite the damage caused by the embargo, Cuba had achieved a great deal in crime prevention, criminal justice and combating the international drug problem. It had proven its commitment to international cooperation in that area, and actively participated in related international forums and mechanisms. It would continue to do its duty in fighting those scourges, and would make every effort to prevent its territory from being used to carry out criminal actions against the people of the United States or any other people in the world.

33. **Ms. Halabi** (Syrian Arab Republic) said that the drug epidemic, the narcotics trade and crime were some of the fundamental problems besetting the modern world and that those phenomena deserved attention because of their destructive impact on social, cultural, economic and political stability and on sustainable development. Immediate solutions were needed in order to mitigate the impact of those phenomena on societies. The Syrian Arab Republic was party to most of the international instruments to combat crime and was one of the first parties to the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime of 2000 and its Protocols. Her Government had concluded bilateral and multilateral agreements, above all in the area of extradition.

34. Trafficking in humans had become one of the most serious aspects of transnational organized crime, transcending national and geographic borders. The Syrian Arab Republic had participated actively in all regional conferences on human trafficking and had set up a national commission that aimed to enact a law against human trafficking, in conjunction with the International Organization for Migration and the United Nations Development Programme.

35. Her Government also supported sincere international efforts to combat terrorism but drew a clear distinction between the fight against terrorism and the inalienable right of persons to fight against foreign occupation. It further endorsed the United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy, along with measures taken under it to eradicate terrorism's underlying causes. Those strategies, however, could in no way replace a definition of terrorism or the conclusion of the process of negotiating a comprehensive convention on terrorism. The Syrian Arab Republic had ratified 10 of the 13 counter-terrorism conventions and was considering acceding to the remaining conventions.

36. Her country had also established a national task force to combat money-laundering and the financing of terrorism, having acceded to the regional anti-terrorism conventions, including the Arab Convention for the Suppression of Terrorism and the relevant Convention of the Organization of the Islamic Conference. Further, her Government had entered into bilateral agreements with a number of countries in the region to facilitate

information-sharing on drug trafficking, and had also signed the Convention against Corruption. The Syrian Government was working closely with the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime and expressed its satisfaction with the regional UNODC office's efforts. It called for further technical and financial support to be provided to the office to enable it to carry out its mission more thoroughly.

37. **Mr. Heller** (Mexico) said that Mexico was an active participant in the work of the Inter-American Drug Abuse Control Commission (CICAD), including the expert groups on chemical substances and pharmaceutical products. It had submitted several draft resolutions at the fiftieth session of the United Nations Commission on Narcotic Drugs. Mexico had promoted initiatives to prevent the illicit distribution via the Internet of controlled pharmaceutical products. In view of the alarming increase in the use of synthetic drugs, his delegation called on the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime to encourage States to develop strategies to combat the illicit distribution of substances via the Internet and to reaffirm their commitment to prevent the use and abuse of such drugs. The International Narcotics Control Board played an important role in the establishment and maintenance of mechanisms for preventing the diversion of chemical precursors for the illegal manufacture of drugs, as well as promoting greater cooperation and exchange of information among countries.

38. Mexico had played a leading role in the development and creation of mechanisms to implement international instruments governing international cooperation in the field of organized crime and drug trafficking, including the United Nations Convention against Corruption, known as the Mérida Convention. On 26 September 2007, the Senate of the Republic had passed the Prevention and Punishment of Trafficking in Persons Act. Mexico condemned human trafficking as a detestable contemporary form of slavery and recognized the urgent need for broad international cooperation to combat it. His delegation looked forward to participating actively in the Vienna Forum to be held in early 2008.

39. **Mr. Al-Hamadi** (Qatar) said that Qatar was committed to participating nationally and internationally in drug control and crime prevention and that it had taken several steps in the recent past to translate its commitment into action. The Global Sport Fund had been established in cooperation with UNODC in May 2006, thanks to the contribution by Qatar. The Fund supported the efforts of organizations worldwide that used athletics to combat drug abuse and juvenile delinquency and crime. The activities supported by the Fund would be models of what could be achieved by athletics, both on the field and beyond it, as it helped communities and youth to chose a better life.

40. UNODC organized popular awareness campaigns in which sporting stars conveyed the message, "Yes to sport, no to drugs". The Office also held sports camps in which sport was used to teach tolerance, leadership, and life skills. Sport was about more than competition and winning. It meant participation, involvement, fitness, enhanced self-confidence, respect and tolerance. He invited delegations to visit the Fund's website, www.globalsportfund.com, to familiarize themselves with the distinct experience of Qatar in that regard. Qatar would continue its efforts on the national level to achieve the international objectives in the field of crime and drug abuse prevention.

41. **Ms. Gendi** (Egypt) said that the United Nations played an important role in crime prevention, criminal justice and combating the drug problem that was fundamental in achieving stability and social peace. Egypt was among the first countries to adopt resolutions relating to that role and ratify regional and international treaties and conventions against all forms of crime and terrorism. It had always worked to support the Organization's activities in building the capacity of Member States to fight organized crime and international terrorism and supported the activities of the United Nations Office for Drugs and Crime, which had its regional office in Cairo.

42. UNODC assisted Member States' capacity to fulfil their commitments under international treaties, prepare national legislation and train their cadres in combating crime, terrorism, corruption and money-laundering. The Office was also creating a programme to combat illegal immigration, a phenomenon that Egypt was particularly beset with as a country of transit. In that regard, Egypt echoed the call for Member States to review their policies concerning travel and identity documents.

43. The Egyptian delegation had studied closely the report of the Secretary-General on strengthening the United Nations Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice

Programme (A/62/126). Despite the vitality of UNODC programmes on the African continent, the Office suffered from a lack of funding. That required the attention of the donor countries and institutions that financed its programmes, since justice and security were two sides of the same coin and were directly related to work on sustainable development in order to achieve the Millennium Development Goals in Africa.

44. Her country commended the efforts by UNODC to promote support for the United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy and the documentation of crime in Africa, given that Africa was one of the least developed regions in that regard. Five countries, including Egypt, were to begin working on the creation of a reliable database to support African efforts to combat crime and drug use.

45. In 2010, countries would meet at the Twelfth United Nations Congress on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice to face new global challenges such as modern economic and technological crimes. Egypt hoped that the appropriate treatment of the underlying causes of the spread of terrorism would be identified and addressed. The Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy had affirmed the importance of ending foreign occupation, as it was one of the causes of violence around the world.

46. **Mr. Sadykov** (Kazakhstan), speaking on behalf of the members of the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS), said that drugs posed one of the most serious threats to mankind, undermining the social, economic and political stability of States and of the international community as a whole. A concerted and comprehensive approach was needed, requiring a maximum of resources. Technical assistance should also be provided for national control efforts. Each year, 150 tons of heroin were trafficked from Afghanistan through Central Asia. That posed a significant threat to the CIS countries, where the number of addicts was projected to increase to 25 million by 2010, and the number of persons living with HIV/AIDS to 10 million. One important initiative was the Paris-Moscow Process, which enabled Governments to pool their efforts to combat the spread of drugs from Afghanistan. The newly established Central Asia Regional Information and Coordination Centre would also be working in close cooperation with the United Nations and UNODC to promote information exchange and analysis. CIS countries had adopted joint plans to harmonize and strengthen border control policy and combat illicit trafficking in narcotic and psychotropic substances and their precursors.

47. **Mr. Swe** (Myanmar), noting that the report of the Secretary-General on international cooperation against the world drug problem (A/62/117) underscored the decline in opium poppy cultivation in the Golden Triangle, pointed out that Myanmar's achievements in reducing poppy cultivation had been documented in the World Drug Reports issued over the last few years. Myanmar had cooperated with the United States in conducting opium yield surveys from 1993 until 2004, although it had received no bilateral assistance from that country to combat the scourge of narcotic drugs. Illicit poppy cultivation had declined steadily in Myanmar for eight consecutive years; however, the latest preliminary figures released by the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) showed that it had increased somewhat in the last few months. Nevertheless, while illicit poppy cultivation in Myanmar had accounted for 63 per cent of the world opium market in 1998, that share had fallen to six per cent by 2006. As noted by the Secretary-General in his report (para. 89), more needed to be done by the international community to assist former opium growers living in extreme poverty to face the challenges posed in the post-opium-cultivating period.

48. His Government was determined to rid the country of narcotic drugs by 2014, one year ahead of the date set by the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN). The country's fight against drugs was based on two strategies aimed at the eradication of narcotic drugs and the total eradication of poppy cultivation by promoting better living standards for people of all nationalities residing in the border areas. Those strategies would be implemented by reducing the supply of drugs, reducing demand and increasing enforcement measures. To that end, the Government had strengthened its enforcement capacity and had been providing alternative livelihood opportunities for farmers so as to encourage them to end their dependence on opium poppy cultivation. The New Destiny Project launched in April 2002 was designed to promote such activities and to provide support to poppy growers as they turned to alternative cash crops.

49. At the regional level, Myanmar was working with other ASEAN members to reach the goal of making the region drug-free by 2015. Myanmar had signed a Memorandum of Understanding with six countries for the creation of a Greater Mekong subregion drug-free

zone. The impressive progress made by Myanmar in combating the drug problem had been achieved with little or no external assistance. Unless assistance was forthcoming to provide alternative livelihood opportunities and help alleviate the acute poverty of former poppy growers, they might eventually go back to their previous business in order to survive. The ominous threat posed by amphetamine-type stimulants was also a growing concern. Myanmar was cooperating closely with its neighbours to prohibit precursor chemicals and eradicate the production of those stimulants. Myanmar neither produced nor imported precursor chemicals.

50. **Mr. Siles** (Bolivia) said that one of the symbols of Bolivia's new national consciousness was the coca leaf, a sacred leaf which had been unjustly criminalized and stigmatized by the international community. The zero coca policy that had been imposed on Bolivia by one of the countries with the highest rates of drug use had only created hardships for the poorest coca-growing families. Through its new policy of "Coca Yes, Cocaine No", the Bolivian Government had made significant progress in the process of banning the precursors used in cocaine production, as well as in seizing drugs in transit to consumer countries. Bolivia had signed and ratified all the treaties aimed at fighting drug use and trafficking and had declared war on cocaine producers, traffickers and users. It was carrying out a well-organized effort to eradicate surplus coca crops, while respecting the human rights of peasants and taking into account the traditional and non-traditional uses of the coca leaf.

51. Bolivia rejected unilateral certifications issued by countries that had set themselves up as judges of his Government's efforts against drug trafficking. Priority should be given to combating those who produced and sold drugs, not the farmers who produced the raw materials. Economic resources should be used to improve technological and logistical resources to make it possible to conduct an efficient campaign against drug traffickers. The effort should be carried out jointly by producer and consumer countries. Demand-reduction policies must be strengthened in order to decrease the supply of raw materials. Bolivia did not need any economic or military help to eradicate coca plantations. What his country needed was technical and economic cooperation to industrialize the beneficial products of the coca leaf. It also needed access to international markets for its alternative products, as well as logistical support to combat the production and sale of cocaine. Markets for the consumption of illicit drugs should be eliminated.

52. **Mr. Azor** (Haiti) said that his Government was committed to working with other countries, in particular the United States and Canada, to eliminate the transit of drugs through Haiti. It applauded the efforts of consumer countries to reduce demand and eliminate trafficking. Haiti had actively participated in the forum on drugs that had been held in the Dominican Republic in March 2007. His Government hoped that the United States would mobilize sufficient resources to combat the illicit trafficking of drugs by sea, pursuant to an agreement signed in 1997. The Haitian Government had taken steps to strengthen the National Commission to Combat Drugs and to reinforce the security forces patrolling the land and maritime borders. It was hoped that the Security Council would approve the Secretary-General's recommendation on enhancing the capabilities of the United Nations Stabilization Mission in Haiti (MINUSTAH) in border control in collaboration with the National Police.

53. His Government was committed to strengthening the judiciary with a view to ensuring stability for the professional staff and attracting some of the most competent personnel who had left the country. Not only had there been an exodus of Haitians, there had also been a sharp decline in the number of tourists visiting Haiti. The reform of the judiciary was crucial to reviving the tourist industry. President Préval was committed to eliminating corruption in the court system and the police force. A working group on law enforcement reform had been established in June 2007 following a meeting convened by the Head of State with the participation, inter alia, of the business sector.

54. In July 2006, with the assistance of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), the Ministry of Justice had embarked on an effort to consolidate the independence of the courts. An inter-ministerial committee had been set up to implement and strengthen judicial cooperation in fighting international organized crime. Training sessions had been held for judges and other officials to enhance their capacity to deal with cases of corruption, drug trafficking, money laundering and organized crime.

55. **Mr. Ganhuayg** (Mongolia) said that his delegation wished to commend the Global Initiative to

Fight Human Trafficking launched by UNODC, which would help enhance the capacity of Member States and other stakeholders to counter human trafficking and implement the Protocol to the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime (Palermo Convention), on the prevention, suppression and punishment of trafficking in persons. His Government was collaborating with the relevant international organizations, including the International Organization for Migration (IOM), on the issues of human trafficking, commercial sexual exploitation and drug abuse.

56. Mongolia attached particular importance to the fight against corruption. As a party to the United Nations Convention against Corruption, his Government had taken significant steps to combat corruption in parallel with steps to combat money-laundering and the financing of terrorism. In July 2006, the Parliament had passed a comprehensive anti-corruption law which provided for the creation of the Anti-Corruption Agency. The newly established Agency needed assistance from the relevant international organizations and agencies of other countries in the areas of jurisdiction, investigation and prosecution, transfer of assets, recovery, training, sharing of best practices and fulfilment of the country's obligations under the United Nations Convention against Corruption. His delegation attached particular importance to the first session of the Conference of the States Parties held in December 2006 in Amman.

57. **Mr. Punkrasin** (Thailand) said that the world drug problem required strengthened international partnerships as well as a holistic approach tackling both supply and demand. The role of the mass media was important in convincing target groups of the danger of drugs. Rehabilitation and reintegration efforts must also be accompanied by improved data collection and evaluation capacity.

58. In the "Golden Triangle" of South-East Asia, illicit opium poppy cultivation had fallen by 80 per cent since 2000 thanks to people-centred alternative development initiatives which provided better access to basic infrastructure, food security, basic health-care services, vocational training and primary education. Thailand had established a regional training centre to share its successes in that regard. His delegation called upon the international community to provide funding for alternative development. Both developed and developing countries should cooperate by opening their markets to such products.

59. Thailand was working hard to tackle trafficking in human beings through prevention, protection and prosecution based on respect for human rights. National legislation was also being amended in line with the relevant protocol of the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime. His delegation strongly supported the Global Initiative to Fight Human Trafficking to be held in Vienna in 2008 and called for full implementation of the Bangkok Declaration adopted by the Eleventh Congress on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice.

60. **Mr. Chin** Mingjun (Singapore) said that the World Drug Report showed that the international drug problem was being contained. Almost half of all cocaine and a quarter of all heroine produced was intercepted. However, there were still 25 million problem drug users worldwide, and several regions lacking central government control continued to thrive as drug production centres. Trafficking continued across borders, making international cooperation vital. In Singapore, legislation had been strengthened to deter drug offenders and enforcement had been tightened. The national drug control strategy included preventive education, rehabilitation and community involvement. In 1995, a National Council Against Drug Abuse had been established, bringing together government bodies, self-help groups, halfway houses and community leaders.

61. Thanks to initiatives such as the Community Action for the Rehabilitation of Ex-Offenders (CARE) Network and Yellow Ribbon Project, the country's drug situation was well under control. The number of arrests for drug abuse had decreased from 6,200 in 1994 to 1,100 in 1996, and the percentage of drug abusers was one of the lowest in the world. Singapore was committed to regional and international cooperation on drug control efforts and had hosted the Twenty-Sixth Meeting of ASEAN Senior Officials on Drug Matters and the Second ASEAN and China Cooperative Operations in Response to Dangerous Drugs (ACCORD) Joint Task Force Meeting. Lastly, his delegation was surprised that the Executive Director of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) had used debate on the current agenda item to express his own personal views on the question of the death penalty and wished to caution him against exceeding his mandate.

62. **Mr. Anshor** (Indonesia) said that crime, drugs and terrorism were universal challenges requiring effective responses at the national, regional and international levels. His delegation commended UNODC on its efforts to provide country-driven technical cooperation in relevant fields. However overdependence on earmarked contributions could lead to an unpredictable funding situation and make it difficult for the Office to plan ahead. UNODC should receive regular resources commensurate with its mandate. The United Nations Global Initiative to Fight Human Trafficking should be the product of an intergovernmental consultative process to ensure that all interests were taken into account. Illicit trafficking in forest products had adverse environmental, social and economic impacts in many countries and called for common international measures. The crime was of particularly grave concern when the sources were tropical rainforests, vital guardians against climate change and global warming.

63. Alternative development was crucial to a balanced and comprehensive drug control strategy, and there was a need for increased partnership between UNODC and other relevant United Nations agencies, international organizations and development partners to strengthen Member States' capacities in that area, including in the area of prevention. Civil society and the private sector also had a role to play. The fight against corruption was another key priority. Indonesia was pleased to be hosting the Second Conference of the State Parties to the United Nations Convention against Corruption in Bali in early 2008.

64. **Mr. Chabar** (Morocco) said that the close connection between organized crime, terrorism and drug trafficking was significant, given the priority placed on combating those scourges. His delegation welcomed the trend towards multisectoral and coordinated national strategies for drug control. However, despite encouraging results, the fight against those ills depended on respect for the rule of law and good governance at the local, national and international levels. Sustained international cooperation and appropriate technical assistance were required to enable effective implementation of such plans, especially in developing countries. Morocco was in the process of harmonizing its national legislation with the Convention against Transnational Organized Crime, which had led to a reform of the Criminal Code and the Code of Criminal Procedure.

65. Further discussion was needed on the human and socio-economic aspects of organized crime, which included trafficking in persons and illicit trafficking of migrants. Morocco had established a National Commission on Narcotic Drugs. It was working to relieve the isolation of its northern provinces, in the hope that increased development would lead to total eradication of the illicit cultivation of cannabis. Crop substitution programmes and the promotion of rural tourism had begun to bear fruit, resulting in a 46 per cent drop in the amount of land under cultivation for cannabis. Morocco was firmly committed to fighting drug trafficking, and was willing to take responsibility for its part in the problem. In reality, however, it was a combination of national efforts, regional cooperation and appropriate international assistance that would bring an end to that scourge.

The meeting rose at 1 p.m.